

AGUNG

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*Art for Well-being,
Art for All*



Official Newsletter of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts

The Heritage of Well-Being: a Culture of Healing

The core culture of the Filipinos assumes that we are all one, that all things are interconnected (The concept of *kapwa*). Our highest values, then, are connectedness, sharing, *pakikipagkapwa*, *kagandahang-loob* and *pakikiramdam*. Realizing these values makes us highly skilled or “geniuses” in genuine connectivity, expressiveness, communicativeness, balancing opposites, flexibility, creativity and wellness.

Our core culture of human connectivity gives us an edge in matters of health and well-being. Medical science has observed that people with close social ties and lots of friends are usually the healthiest in the world. As social ties increase, mortality rates decrease. Social isolation breeds depression, which may lead to lower immunity to disease and even suicide. The way Filipino parents lavish their babies with love and affection is absolutely necessary for their survival and for their healthy growth. For human immune systems function well only when basic emotional needs such as acceptance and love are met. At their best, Filipinos, are a highly nurturing, caring, sharing people, with a strong maternal orientation. Because of our prowess in interpersonal communication, a nurturing, caring attitude, and “*malasakit*,” we excel in the service professions or industry.

The Philippines is the world’s most emotional country, according to an international study, making us a most expressive people. Being expressive, especially through the performing arts, is an effective way of maintaining a healthy heart. The concept of *kapwa* presupposes the absolute equality of man and woman. In our culture, this is manifested in a high degree of gender equality, the highest in Asia-Pacific and one of the highest in the world. As a result, gender tension in our culture is almost nil, paving the way for healthy relationships. Filipinos are highly participatory: we demand collective, equal participation in decision-making and self-determination. No one must have a monopoly of the decision-making process. In Filipino society, everybody is a participant or performer, easily seen in being given the choice of what to eat when served food the Filipino way. Being gifted this creative choice is definitely conducive to health and well-being. To sum up then: Filipinos can be proud of their healing culture, where life is a celebration. We are highly relational. Social interconnectedness leads to longevity. We are highly expressive. Expressiveness, especially through music and dance, releases harmful emotions. Our participatory creativity promotes well-being. Filipinos touch a lot. Touching as a way of life increases immunity to disease. Our deep belief in God makes us optimistic and provides meaning to life. And our people’s strong sense of humor and joy of life enable us to rebound easily from any tragedy.

Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.
FELIPE M. DE LEON, JR.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts

As the government arm for culture and the arts, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is the overall policy-making, coordinating, and grants-giving agency for the preservation, development and promotion of Philippine arts and culture; and executing agency for the policies it formulates; and an agency tasked to administer the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts (NEFCA). The NCCA traces its roots to the Presidential Commission for Culture and the Arts (PCCA), which was created when President Corazon Aquino signed Executive Order No. 118 on January 30, 1987, “mindful of the fact that there is a need for a national body to articulate a national policy on culture, to conserve and promote national heritage, and to guarantee a climate of freedom, support and dissemination for all forms of artistic and cultural expression.”

On April 3, 1992, President Aquino signed Republic Act No. 7356 creating the NCCA and establishing the NEFCA, a result of over two years of legislative consultations among government and private sector representatives. The bill was sponsored by senators Edgardo J. Angara, Leticia Ramos-Shahani, Heherson T. Alvarez and congressman Carlos Padilla. The NCCA Secretariat, headed by the executive director and headquartered at the historic district of Intramuros, provides administrative and technical support to the NCCA and other units, and delivers assistance to the culture and arts community and the public.

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The *agung* is a knobbed metal gong of the Philippines used in various communal rituals. Suspended in the air by rope or metal chains, the musical instrument is also employed by some indigenous groups as a means to announce community events, and as an indicator of the passage of time.

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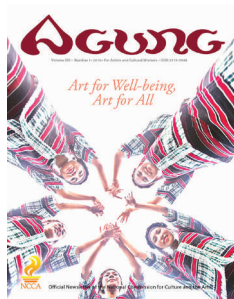
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About the cover

Front cover shows Kankana-ey girls of Benguet joining hands /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

Facing page: 3D chalk art by Guhit Visual Arts Group at the Rizal Park during the National Arts Month opening program of the NCCA /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

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FOR ALL TO PARTAKE OF

NCCA Emphasizes the Accessibility of Art for National Arts Month



Sinukwan Kapampangan Dance Troupe

With this year's theme "Public Art: Art for All," the NCCA highlighted the accessibility of art as well as its presence in everyday life in its celebration of National Arts Month (NAM) in February.

Rizal Park hosted NCCA's kick-off celebration on February 7, 2016 at its Open-Air Auditorium. Pre-program activities consisted with chalk and 3D art demonstrations facilitated by Guhit Visual Arts Group. A leaf harp workshop was conducted at the park's Chess Area facilitated by Joey Ayala and Bohol-based artist Rodolfo Mercado. Alongside the workshop was a screening of short films from Cinema Rehiyon, NCCA's flagship project for cinema, at the auditorium. A drum-beaters' parade around the park served as a prelude to the main program.

The opening program featured performances by Ayala, Mercado, the Halili-Cruz Ballet Company, ventriloquist Ony Carcamo and the Sinukwan Kapampangan dance troupe. This show was followed by another one at the Marikina Riverbanks Center in Marikina City on February 11, featuring Beverly Caimen, BLKD and UPeepz.

For the whole month, different local government units, agencies, institutions and other groups contributed to the celebration of NAM. These included the Singkuwento International Film Festival Manila Philippines, which was held from February 19 to 27 at the Leandro Locsin Auditorium of the NCCA in Intramuros, Manila; and on March 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 at the UPFI UP Film Center at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Outside Metro Manila, the array of events and activities included a *kurambos* at the Bohol Cultural Center; Pasundayag Kabanhawan in Capiz; a concert in Buenavista, Southern Leyte; "*Sining at Pag-ibig*" in Los Banos, Laguna; and Daggit: An Arts and Culture Fair in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

The NCCA's NAM celebration closed with Ani ng Dangal awarding ceremonies on February 29.

The annual celebration of National Arts Month started with the signing of Presidential Proclamation 683 in 1991, declaring February as National Arts Month. Over the years, NCCA, as well as private and government agencies, has been organizing events and activities to highlight the artistic brilliance of the Filipinos.

Joey Ayala jamming with Bohol-based artist Rodolfo Mercado; the Halili-Cruz Ballet Company; ventriloquist Ony Carcamo; and opening program performers with NCCA chairman Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. and OIC-exectuive director Adelina Suemith /Photos by Marvin Alcaraz



A Kurambos of the Arts in Bohol



The Cebu Classic Orchestra performing with local and international artists at the “Kurambos” gala concert at the Bohol Cultural Center

The Bohol Arts and Cultural Heritage (BACH) Council, in partnership with the NCCA, the Center for Culture and Arts Development (CCAD), Bohol Sandugo Foundation, the Diocese of Tagbilaran and Kasing Sining, celebrated National Arts Month with “*Kurambos: Arts in Convergence*.”

Kurambos is a slang word in Cebuano which means “to bring together the various resources of a group to realize an activity or common endeavor.” For example, a group of youngsters wishes to go out on a picnic. Each one contributes any amount so the group can buy *tuba* to be shared equally, regardless of how much one has put up for the common kitty. Art, by its nature, has many faces and can be appreciated through the different disciplines sharing its crafts and its unique expressions to enhance each other, highlight each other and celebrate each other.

In appropriating the term *kurambos* in this year’s celebration of National Arts Month, BACH celebrated art’s convergence, a collage of artistic expression, highlighting and celebrating the multi-faceted expressions of art coming in convergence with each other’s artistic talents.

“*Kurambos*” opened on February 5, 2015, at the Bohol Cultural Center, with activities and performances composed within

the space, affording the audience to witness different creative processes simultaneously happening and involving *amakan* and *banig* weavers, dancers, painters, singers, poets and musicians. Performers were from Holy Name University’s Diwanag Dance Theater and Ethnic Music Ensemble, Dr. Cecilio Putong National High School Special Program for the Arts (SPA) choir and dance club, visual artists Joey Labrador and Jacky Curambao, Artiststar singer Tom Vergara, and *amakan* weavers from Toril, Maribojoc.

On February 10, the province celebrated Peace Day. Arts Talks, a series of symposia, featured filmmakers from *Heneral Luna*, *Honor Thy Father* and *Lakbay2Love* delivering a talk on “Behind the Scenes in the Making of the Filipino Indie Films” on February 23, while Philippine ambassador for the ASEAN Luis Cruz and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) artistic director Chris Millado talked on “The Impact of the ASEAN Integration on the Arts Scene in Asia” on February 24 at the Bohol Cultural Center.

“*Balot, Beer, Balak*,” a workshop for budding Boholano writers, culminated in a poetry reading with musical numbers at the city public plaza, mounted by KAKA (Kalawat ni Kariyapa), on February 12.

The visual arts sector organized exhibits of Boholano artists, including “Show

101 Highlights” by the Industrial Design students of Bohol Island University at the Bohol Cultural Center (February 17 to 19) and “Pinuga sa Huna-Huna” by the faculty and students of the University of Bohol College of Fine Arts and Architecture at the UB Atrium on February 24.

Bohol hosted the founding congress and festival of TABOK, the Central Visayas Regional Theater Network with workshops, organizational launching and performances from drama groups from Cebu, Negros and Bohol, with a special preview of *Dagohoy the Musical* by the Bohol Theater Network headed by the Kasing Sining at the Bacayon Cockpit Theater.

Boholano conductors provided systematic mentoring and coaching advice to emergent and traditional choral groups in the province to raise their competence in choral conducting and repertoire development via workshops-cum-clinics on choral conducting and singing, held on February 14, 21 and 28.

“*Kurambos*” ended with a special concert of the newly formed 45-member Visayas Symphony Orchestra from Cebu, under the baton of Rey Abellana, performing a varied repertoire of orchestral works from the classical to the popular, with numbers performed with Boholano musical artists, on February 27 at the Bohol Cultural Center.

Remembrance and Celebration in Angono

The town of Angono in the province of Rizal is often touted as the “Art Capital of the Philippines.” One-fourth of the population of the town are artists, boasted councilor Elmer B. Deloritos, who heads Angono’s Committee on Arts, Culture and Tourism. Not only that, Angono has also produced National Artists—Carlos “Botong” Francisco in visual arts and Lucio San Pedro in music—whom the town regularly honors.

On the 103rd birth anniversary of San Pedro on February 11, 2016, Angono honored the National Artist through a show at

the Angono Lakeside Park as the sun set. “*Sa Gunita ng Musika at Awit: Pang-alaalang Palatuntunang Parangal para sa Ika-103 Taong Kaarawan ni Maestro Lucio D. San Pedro*” was also their way of celebrating National Arts Month.

Cristine Espi Salita, a descendant of San Pedro, commented that the venue—by the shore of Laguna de Bay—was very apt as the town of Angono and its environment were the inspiration for San Pedro’s music. She also said that he had produced about 500 compositions.

One of San Pedro’s more popular



Ang Nuno Dance Troupe /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

compositions is the lullaby “*Sa Ugoy ng Duyan*,” which was included in the com-

The tribute program for National Artist for music Lucio San Pedro was held by the shore of Laguna de Bay in Angono, Rizal /Photo by Roel Hoang Manipon





Ars Noveau Chorale /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz



Angono National Symphonic Orchestra /Photo by Roel Hoang Manipon

memorative program, performed by Mary Grace Soleil I. San Pedro, another San Pedro descendant. Her performance was accompanied by music from the RLSAA (Regional Lead School for the Arts in Angono) Chamber Orchestra and interpretative dance by Teatro Kalayaan.

"Sa Gunita ng Musika at Awit" featured homegrown and young talents and artists of Angono including Ars Noveau Chorale, Teatro Kalayaan, Ang Nuno Dance Troupe, creative writing students of the RLSAA, Orville DR. Tiamson, RLSAA Chamber Orchestra and the Angono National Symphonic Band. It also was a fusion of different art forms.



Orville DR. Tiamson /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz



Nora Aunor Leads Ani ng Dangal Awardees for the Third Time

National Arts Month Celebration Closes Honoring Internationally-Acclaimed Artists

Veteran actress and local entertainment's Superstar Nora Aunor led this year's Ani ng Dangal awardees, who was honored in a ceremony on February 29, 2016, at the Samsung Hall of SM Aura Premier in Taguig City.

Eighty-three artists from different fields of the arts—one for architecture and allied arts, one for broadcast arts, forty-five for cinema, seven for dance, three for dramatic arts, fourteen for music, and twelve for visual arts—were recognized by the NCCA for their international achievements.

The Ani ng Dangal (Harvest of Honors) Awards recognizes artists who have

earned international awards and accolades during the past year. It is an annual event, which serves as the closing activity of the NCCA's celebration of the National Arts Month.

"The collective creativity of the people here has made the art and culture scene of the Philippines alive," stated Senator Loren Legarda, keynote speaker of the event. "Too often, art is mistaken as a luxury instead of a necessity. But try to imagine a society that lacks the humanizing influence of music, movies, theater, visual arts, literature and you get a life that is bereft of pleasure or contemplation. We would have no reason to argue or celebrate, or

dream. Arts and culture shed light on our inner selves and allow us to connect as a society."

"In the economic realm, thousands of Filipinos have been working all over the world in creative industries as writers, artists, editors, photographers, musicians, filmmakers and they bring not only pride but revenues for the country. Investing in arts and culture is an economic necessity," she further said.

Aside from winning the best lead actress award at the third St. Tropez International Film Festival in France on May 16, 2015, Aunor received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2015 ASEAN Interna-

Nora Aunor received the Ani ng Dangal award for her filmic achievements in 2015. With her are (from left) PFPD chief Marichu Tellano; NCCA chairman Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.; NCCA OIC-executive director Adelina M. Suemith; Maria Josefina Roque-Ricafort, Legislative Committee Secretary of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture of the Philippine House of Representatives; and National Committee on Cinema vice head Teddy Co. /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz





Ani ng Dangkal awardees in the field of cinema /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

tional Film Festival and Awards on April 11, 2015, at the Borneo Convention Centre in Kuching, Malaysia. She previously received the Ani ng Dangkal awards in 2012 and 2013.

Also at the ASEAN International Film Festival, Cherie Gil won the Best Actress honor for her performance in the film *Sonata*, and thus, also received an Ani ng Dangkal award in the field of cinema this year, together with Aunor.

With Aunor and Gil, those honored for cinema included Aiko Melendez, Albert Chan Paran, Allen Dizon, Benjamin Tolentino, Brillante Mendoza, Carlo Enciso Catu, Epy Quizon, Emilio Garcia, Joseph Israel Laban, Jun Robles Lana, Lemuel Lorca, Sid Lucero, Liza Diño, LJ Reyes, Louie Ignacio, Micko Laurente, Ralston Javier and Richard Gomez.

Also to be honored were the people behind award-winning films *Ang Huling Cha-Cha Ni Anita*, *Ari*, *Balibayan #1*, *Bambanti*, *Boundary*, *Bwaya*, *Children Show*, *Dementia*, *Ekstra*, *In Nominee Matrix*, *Kanlungan*, *K'na*, *the Dreamweaver*, *Lihis*, *Mana*, *Magkakabaung*, *Paraiso*, *Princess Urduja*, *Purok 7*, *Red Lights*, *Ruined Heart*, *Sundalong Kanin*, *That Thing Called Tadhana*, *The Waves*, *Wawa* and *Yolanda*.

GMA 7's *Front Row* was feted in the broadcast arts category, while Bernardo

Bernardo, Jhett Tolentino and Rachelle Ann Go were recognized in the field of dramatic arts.

In the field of dance, the Bayanihan National Folkdance Company, Hali-Cruz School of Ballet, Jamaica France Jornacion and Lawrence Santiago, Klivert John Mendoza, Sayawatha and Upeepz enthralled international audiences with their grace, choreography and skills, earning them accolades as well as this year's Ani ng Dangkal awards.

In the field of music, the Aleron Choir, Anna Tabita Abeleda-Piquero, Ate-neo Chamber Singers, Boschorale, Imusicapella, Los Cantantes de Manila, Ryan Tamondong, Triple Fret, University of Visayas Chorale, University of the Philippines Concert Chorus, University of the Philippines Manila Chorale, University of Santo Tomas Singers, Acapellago and Kammerchor Manila were recognized for their international achievements.

In visual arts, Ana Katrina Miranda, Ananda Wisely, Herbert Bagolbagol, Jamia Mei Tolentino, Jamille Bianca Aguilar, John Herrera, Jophel Botero Ybioso, Maria Angelica Tejada, Mandy Javillonar, Robert Anton Aparante, Ruston Banal and Trisha Co Reyes showed Filipino artistic excellence in the world, as well as Christian Salandanan in the field of architecture and allied arts.

The Ani ng Dangkal exhibit was also mounted during the awards night, paying tribute to the awardees' achievements and contributions by displaying their works and trophies.



THE ANI NG DANGKAL TROPHY

The Ani ng Dangkal trophy is a stylized *sarimanok*, designed by Abdulmari Asia Imao, National Artist for visual arts, and executed by his son Toym Imao, representing the achievements of the Filipino artists in the global stage.



The NCCA, through the National Committee on Visual Arts (NCVA), spearheaded an endeavor of creating murals in public spaces. Called Art in Public Spaces, the project aims to promote and popularize the Philippine culture and arts through public art. It also aims to heighten the sense of pride of the communities where the project would be conducted by highlighting local cultural icons and artists.

In 2014, the NCCA partnered with the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and various visual arts organizations for the project, kicking off with the mural paintings done under the Mabini Bridge

in Manila.

However, the project was put on hold because of some challenges with the proponent and was realigned for the 2015 projects. The Arts in Public Spaces was implemented from August to November of 2015.

Last year, the first phase of the project was in partnership with the local government of Pasay City, in cooperation with the Pasay City Tourism Council and other local agencies. The second phase was implemented with the Philippine Air Force (PAF) Unit A7, the PAF Museum and their dependents.

The first phase was done at the Pasay Public Cemetery and Crematorium along

Aurora Boulevard (formerly Tramo Street). Located along the highway leading to the airport, the colorful mural painting would be visible to many people. The mural project started with a workshop on mixing colors and proper brushstrokes, which was attended by about ten children from the surrounding community, aged six to eleven years old. On September 12, 2015, the painting proper began. The children filled in the outlines done by the artists, and participated for three consecutive weekends.

In the second phase of the project, the PAF Museum walls, visible when going outside of the Ninoy Aquino International



THE POWER OF



Airport, was painted on. Twenty-two dependents of PAF officials, aged six to fifteen years old, joined the art workshop on mixing colors, basic sketching and other techniques. The painting proper lasted for two weekends.

For the artwork to be meaningful, it has to resonate with the members of the community. The art committee engaged the whole community in the activity.

Artist facilitators guided the creative process through workshops and actual mural painting. Leading the facilitators was artist Edgar Talusan Fernandez, who is the current vice head of the NCVA. Helping him facilitate the project was the Cavity Collective, a

group of individuals utilizing public spaces as their primary means of visual expression established in 2010.

Through the community participation, the NCCA hopes that the citizens will recognize the value of arts in human and social development. Both Arts in Public Spaces projects seemed to have contributed to the community life and enliven the neighborhood.

At present, the Pasay community maintained the area where the mural is. Since they worked on the murals themselves, they would have the sense of belonging, pushing them to take care of the mural. The mural also became an instrument for the Pasay lo-

cal government to show to its citizens the history of the city and its evolution from being a field of sugar cane to being a progressive city that it is now.

In the case of PAF Museum, which is an educational tour destination for schools, the colorful artworks serve as an instrument to change children's perception on soldiers and wars. Also, the mural paintings help in the beautification of the headquarters.

Through Arts in Public Spaces, the NCCA aims to add meaning to our cities, instill identity and connect people to Philippine arts and culture one public space at a time.

Art in Public Spaces activities at the Pasay Public Cemetery and Crematorium and Philippine Air Force Museum at Villamor Airbase in Pasay City



OF PUBLIC ART



A Feast of the Arts

at the Pasinaya Open House Festival

Folk dance at the CCP's Main Ramp /Photo by Kiko Cabuena

Numerous visitors from all walks of life flocked to the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on Sunday, February 7, 2016, to watch performances and join activities for families and children at the Pasinaya Open House Festival.

This was headlined by the CCP's own resident companies—the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, University of Santo Tomas Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Philippines, Philippine Ballet Theater, Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, National Music Competitions for Young Artists, Philippine Madrigal Singers and Tanghalang Pilipino. Also, more than 3,000 artists from community-based and school-based artistic groups participated in the 2016 CCP Pasinaya with the theme “Family and Children.”

Performances were mounted, starting at eight in morning, at various CCP venues. Workshops, film screenings, lecture-demonstrations, exhibits and storytelling activities were likewise held.

Metropolitan Museum and Museo Pambata on Roxas Boulevard; National Museum on P. Burgos Drive, Rizal Park; Casa Manila and Bahay Tsinoy in Intramuros; 1335 Mabini Gallery in Ermita, Manila; Museo Marino; University of the Philippines Manila's Museum of A History of Ideas; and the Film Development Council of the Philippines' Cinematheque Manila opened their doors to the public for Pasinaya. Aside from the exhibits on view at these partner institutions, performances were also held.

Pasinaya is the biggest multi-arts festival in the Philippines featuring the participation of thousands of artists and hundreds of artistic and cultural groups. It offers to the public on a unique “pay-what-you-can-see-all-you-can” donation scheme the opportunity to enjoy a sneak preview of the CCP performance season.



A dance group performs at the CCP's Eskinita /Photo by Kiko Cabuena

A Square

*Cultural Center
of the Philippines
to Build Black Box Theater*

By Maria Glaiza Lee

In the last thirty years, the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex has been a quiet presence, the massive property seemingly wasting away. But this year, with newfound control over its properties, the country's leading cultural center will see new development with a new black box theater.

CCP vice president and artistic director Chris Millado said there is no better way to start the new year than with breaking the ground for the new theater building, which happened on January 19, 2016, at the sunken parking lot of the CCP Complex in Pasay City.

Witnessing the landmark event were CCP board members Florangel Rosario Braid, Cristina Turalba, former CCP president Nestor Jardin, Leandro V. Locsin Partners (LVLP) administrator Andy Locsin, CCP chairperson Emily Abrera, black box theater donor Ignacio Gimenez, CCP president Raul Sunico, Eurotowers Group director Roberto Olanday, CCP vice president for administration Rodolfo del Rosario, technical theater consultant Maree Barbara Tantiongco, CCP board trustee Danny Dolor, and CCP employees and media guests.

But what exactly is Black Box?

“People say that just give floorboards and a passion, and these are all that artists need. But can you imagine if you give artists a black box (theatre), with lights, sounds, backstage, a lobby and a parking space for audiences who want to see new works? A black box is not just a black box. It is an incubator for new original Filipino works, a living workshop for new works, and a place for engaging new audiences. It can be a platform and a showcase for innovations on the arts not just in the Philippines, but in Asia. This is the promise of the (CCP) Black Box (Theater) we are breaking ground today,” said Millado.

He added: “This Black Box is full of manna. In this case, it is where the gifts are lovingly prepared for the next generations of Filipinos. It is where we put together memo-

Root of Artistic Dreams



ry and strict history, ensure that these live on and enrich our heritage. On this day, we are not just digging a hole, but we are releasing the gifts.”

CCP chairperson Abrera shared that this new development in the CCP Complex was conceptualized years ago, during the time of then president Nestor Jardin: “Maybe, this is the most significant event since I joined the CCP Board in 2004. I have witnessed the birth and conceptualization of the master plan for this project. Nestor Jardin shepherded this, with the vision to develop a mix-use, artistic enclave that could house the arts and the day-to-day living, combined with business. This is twelve years in the making. We have traveled together in this long road, from the completion of the plan in 2006, (to) finding partners, bidding, failed bidding, competition for the designs and turbulent times.”

And the realization of this project owes much to one man’s generosity and strong affinity with theater. Months ago, businessman Ignacio Gimenez and his brother Roberto Olanday allotted part of their fortune to make the dream of constructing a new

theater come true.

“Theater is in my blood. Back in high school, I was already into acting and theater. In college, I was a member of the UP Dramatic Club and UP Mobile Theater, and even became president of the clubs. I hope this new development will fulfill its promise. A black box is not for the big stars; the big stars usually perform in the big stage. This is for the new talents, new writers. And I hope it will fulfill that—a place where new talents will be born,” said Gimenez.

Leading the project is architect Locsin, who disclosed that construction of the Black Box Theater is part of a bigger development within the complex: “After finding control over its properties, it is the first time in a very, very long that the CCP will be constructing buildings that are truly dedicated to the arts...Lots of frustrations to get this project off the ground, including the thought that the project would not see the light for a whole host of reasons.”

He explained that the overall project consists of three elements: firstly, the new art center, supposedly located directly behind

the CCP, which is now the Design Center; secondly, a theater for the performing arts, of which the Black Box is the first component; and thirdly, a large amphitheater, with a garden lawn in between the sunken parking area and Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas.

“There are four aspects that we believe lie at the core of both the new building’s success, in terms of the relevance of CCP as a natural and national cultural institution, and public acceptance—primacy, authenticity, flexibility and sustainability,” shared Locsin.

In primacy, the cultural elements are within the public consciousness, highlighting the original role of the CCP building as the prime piece of the whole development and injecting renewed spirit to the utility of the new building. Authenticity attempts the balance between economics and aesthetics, creating a context that encourages widest interaction between public and the arts. Flexibility is for purposes remaining relevant and adaptable over time. Sustainability looks at the environmental impact, material choices, energy use, operations efficiency, green qualities and calamity readiness.

“All we have to do is to stand here and understand that the sea is just a few hundred meters away. Calamities we have to face in the future have to be addressed in this new building. Its design has to be relevant to the artists and the cultural community in the continuum,” said Locsin.

The CCP Complex is part of the 88-hectare reclamation project along Roxas Boulevard, fronting Manila Bay, that began in the 1960s. Out of that land area, CCP owns 62.4 hectares, with 57.8 hectares marked as developable area.

Artist’s rendition of the interior theater space of the CCP Black Box Theater



Living on Tilted Earth in the Rir

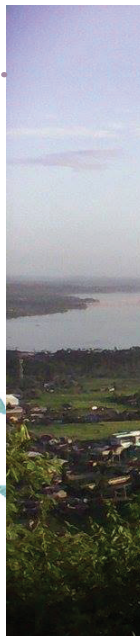
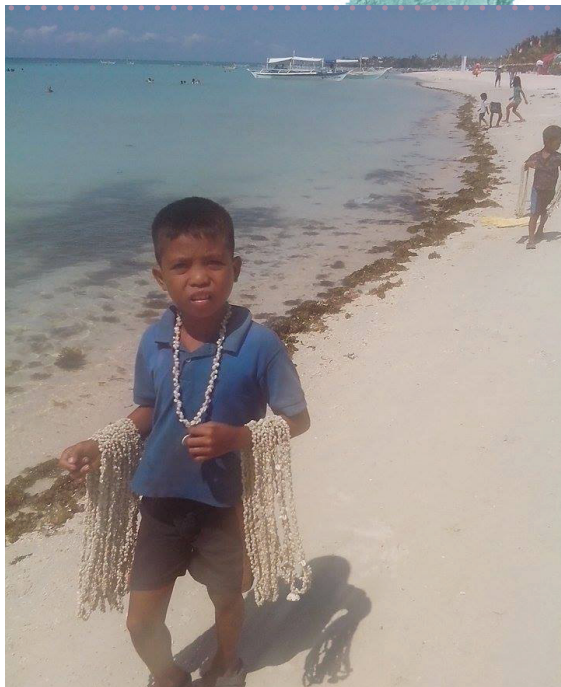


A tableau of the attack on American soldiers at the shrine in Balangiga, Samar /Photo by Charles Kevin Tan



RoRo Journeys participants interacted with women mat weavers in Basey, Samar /Photo by Charles Kevin Tan

Participants took photos of local scenes such as a boy selling shell necklaces by the beach in Bantayan Island, Cebu / Photo by Charles Kevin Tan



Teatro Obrero reenacts the Escalante Massacre right on the site where it happened, 30 years after. /Photo by Emil Yap



Birth, Living of Fire and Raging Storms

By Susan Claire Agbayani

Dealing with Disaster via Performance

Somewhere in Baclayon, Bohol, lies buried the remains of a blue whale. Where did the blue whale come from? And why did it end up on the shores of Baclayon? Twenty years after it had been buried, its bones will be displayed by townsfolk above the spot where it lies. This Dr. Catherine Diamond of Soochow University of Taiwan found out one afternoon while taking a stroll at the beach across our quarters at Homestay de Bai Bed and Breakfast. It made us think about history—time passing and how we mark it—as well as the connections people make with their environment.

Last year, a group of artist-scholars journeyed to and through 51 towns and cities in the archipelago: on foot, and via tricycle/sidecar, jeepney, van, bus and boat—“rolling on and rolling off” from one site to the next—to investigate resilience as a response to disaster via performance. We went to the Visayas in March, Luzon in April, then finally Mindanao in July in a span of eight weeks, spread over four months. Thus, the voyage name of “Fluid States: RoRo Journeys.”

Performance Studies International (PSI), the worldwide professional association of artists, scholars and audiences interested in performing arts, culture and creativity, throughout last year held PSI#21: Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing, a festival of conferences, symposia and performances across Europe, Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific.

The Philippine cluster of this global project was PSI#21 Philippines: Performance, Disaster, and Resilience in Archipelagic Space, which was co-organized in the Philippines with the National Committee on Dramatic Arts (NCCA) of the NCCA and De La Salle University (DLSU). The journeys included interactions and workshops with disaster-affected communities and theater groups, and performances and conferences in key sites.

The Visayas

The RoRo Journeys kicked off via its Visayan leg in March 2015, covering Leyte, Samar, Cebu, Bohol, Negros and Panay islands, ending on April 15. Our first stop was Leyte, with a program organized by Joycie Dorado Alegre and University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban. Our team visited survivors of typhoon Yolanda on ground zero in Tacloban City, Leyte, and the historic site Balangiga, Samar; and interacted with members of Sirang Theater Ensemble of Leyte Normal University in Tacloban City, the Palo Culture and Arts Organization (PCAO) of Palo, Leyte, and members of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) working with PCAO on a post-disaster project. We also immersed with women weavers of Basey, Samar.

In Bohol, we listened to Lutgardo Labad, one of the prime movers of the arts/culture scene in Bohol, local historian Marianito Luspo and Bohol Local Development Foundation president Nestor Pestelos. In Bacolod, we learned about sugar, the plight of the sugar workers, the role of the church, and the work of Negros artists from Roque Hofleña, Cecille Nava and Bishop Alminaza. We spoke with mayor Viscuso de Lira of Balangiga, Samar; mayor Chris Escario of Bantayan, Cebu; and governor Alfredo Maranon, Jr. of Negros Occidental. The Capiz Tourism Office

View from refuge site at Fatima Hill in Tacloban, Leyte /Photo by Charles Kevin Tan



The Kamalig Consultation for Central Visayas Theater Network held from May 25 to 26, 2015, at the Silliman University. The group from Santa Fe in Bantayan Island as well as the Jao group joined this consultation after the Roro Journeys. /Photo by Aziza Daksla

hosted us during their Capiz-tahan.

The team watched a community theater show in Santa Fe, Bantayan Island; and performances by UP Ideopraxist in UP Visayas Tacloban, Kasing Sining in Baclayon, Jao Mobile Theater/ Visayan Mission Confraternity in Jao Island in Bohol, Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA) in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, and Dagway Sigmahanon in Roxas City, Capiz.

In Negros Occidental, we watched performances of and interacted with members of Teatro Obrero in Escalante, Christian Community Theater in Silay City, Kanlaon Theater Guild of Colegio San Agustin, Kalingaw Ang Teatro Hiligaynon, and Maskara Theater Ensemble of University of St. La Salle (USLS) in Bacolod City and Little Theater of the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City.

We observed Holy Week processions in Bantayan Island, Cebu, and Catholic Easter practices *bugos* and *salubong* in Baclayon. We visited a Spanish fort in Madridejos, Bantayan Island; the cockpit-turned-theater Teatro Porvenir in Bohol; the Chapel of the Angry Christ in Victorias City; the Gaston Mansion, Museo Negrense, Balay Negros Museum and Gallery Orange in Bacolod City; Casa Mariquit in Iloilo City; and the Basura Garden in Balete, Aklan; then attended conferences at the UP Visayas Tacloban, Museo Negrense of USLS in Bacolod City.

Luzon

The Luzon journey took us to Baguio City, Bontoc, Sagada, Banaue, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Manila, Laguna, Batangas, and Naga City and Legazpi from April 20 to May 12, 2015. We interacted with local artists, visited arts and performance hubs, museums and galleries in Baguio. We listened to Art Tibaldo, Luchie Maranan and Padma Perez talk about lessons from the 1990 earthquake. We watched a performance by the Tanghalang SLU of Saint Louis University, met with Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera (DKK) and Obon di Malayad groups in Bontoc, participated in the Macliing Dulag memorial activities in Bauko, Mountain Province, and got acquainted with TADEK and the Dulaang UP Baguio. And we witnessed the Lang-ay Festival of Mountain Province and the Imbayah Festival in Banaue, Ifugao. Going down to Tarlac, we had a workshop with the children of the Abelling community in San Jose and learned about their Anito Festival.

We visited the site of the Lenten crucifixion rituals in Cutud, and a church half-buried in ash in Bacolor, Pampanga; met with the Barasoain Kalinangan Foundation, Inc.; and visited the Barasoain Church and its history museum. On our way south, we participated in the Labor Day march and rally in Manila, and interacted with ARTIST, Inc. in Laguna. Letran Calamba hosted our forum on flood stories and resilience around the lake. In Naga City, we joined the launching event of the Susog Salog advocacy for the Naga River, and in Legazpi City we immersed in the community theater activities of Sining Banwa.

Mindanao

In Mindanao, we visited the Sama Badjao relocation sites through the Ateneo de Zamboanga Center for Culture and the Arts. We traveled to Buug where Bai Labi Sonita Ryde taught us dances of the Subanen; and in Pagadian, the St. Columban College offered us performances of their theater group and choir. With local partners, we visited the Cotta pilgrimage site in Ozamiz, the Dapit Alim Meditation Center in Lanao del Norte, Padian Market in Marawi, the Xavier Ecoville resettlement for Sendong survivors in Cagayan de Oro, the T'boli School of Living Traditions in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, and the Museo Davaoeno in Davao City.

We watched performances by Teatro Guindegan of La Salle University Ozamiz City, the Integrated Performing Arts Guild at Mindanao State University (MSU)-Iligan Institute of Technology, Sining Kambayoka at MSU-Marawi, Xavier Stage and other groups of the Xavier Culture and Arts Center, Sining Kabpapgriya Ensemble of MSU-General Santos, and Teatro Humanidades of Ateneo de Davao. Also in Davao, we had a forum with Kublai Millan and other artists based there.

In many of these places, we met with Yakan, Sama, Subanen, T'boli, Talaandig, and B'laan communities and the Badjao village in Matina, Davao. We went to the Palamadani First Moro Arts Festival in General

Mapping activity (Abelling) at the sitio of San Pedro, Iba, San Jose, Tarlac /Photo by Joan De Leon of ARTIST, Inc.

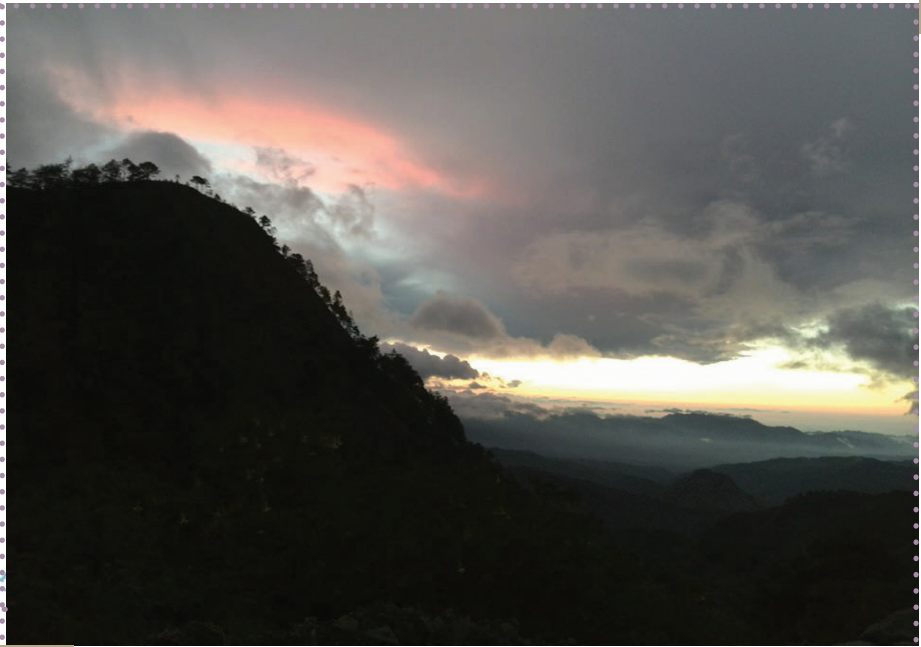


View from Bauko, Mountain Province /Photo by Michelle Clarito

Participants Joan de Leon, Vannessa San Juan, Em Mendez, Jed Rosario, Matyline Camfli, Leo Llana, Jazmin Llana, Michelle Clarito, Ces Benitez, Claire Agbayani, Belen Calingacion, Keith O-niel Roldan, Lindsay Goss, Rosalie Zerrudo /Photo by Emil Yap



Sunset in Abatan, Bauko /Photo by Michelle Clarito



Sining Banwa performs at the Puro, Legazpi Boulevard /Photo by Michelle Clarito



Dr. Belen Calingacion reading poetry in Albay /Photo by Michelle Clarito



Lang-Ay Festival in Bontoc, Mountain Province /Photo by Michelle Clarito



Santos City and witnessed part of the first B'laan Day, all courtesy of the Kalimudan Arts Center. At the "theater and spirituality" conference of La Salle University-Ozamiz, we learned about the work of Fr. Larry Helar, Fr. Dong Galenzoga and Br. Karl Gaspar. And at Cagayan de Oro City, we participated in the conference of the Mindulani Theater Network coming to come to grips with the challenges of theater work in Mindanao.

Recurring Themes: Water, Bells

Clearly, one of the recurring themes during our voyage was "water"—something that gives and sustains life, but also, depending on the form it takes, causes death and so much destruction and grief at its wake. Water in all its power and might destroyed so much of Tacloban, Leyte, which we saw firsthand when we interacted with residents of Payapay—or ground zero—a no-build zone where houses were beginning to sprout anew.

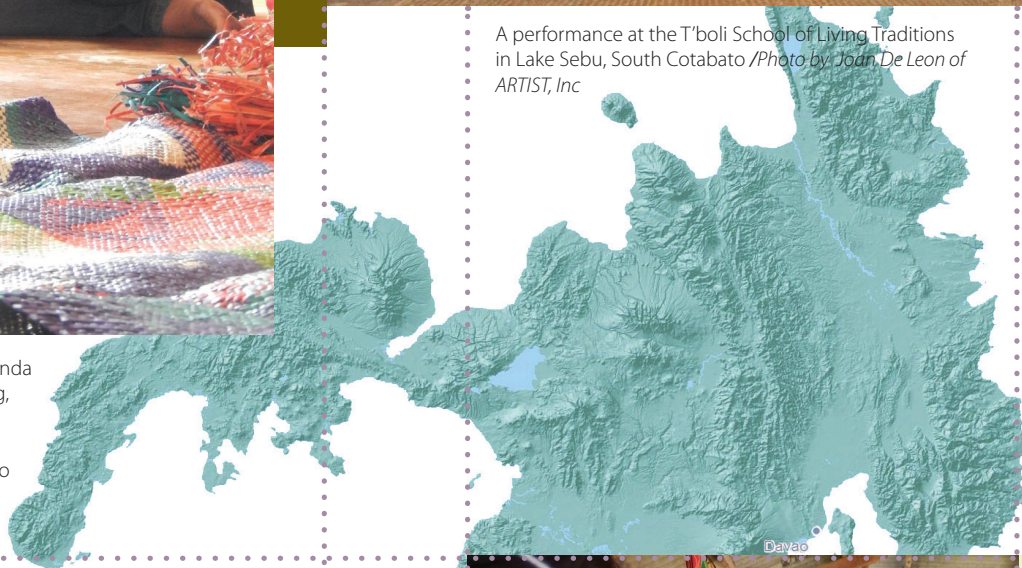




The group interacted with Luzviminda Francisco of *barangay* of Mampang, Masepla I, in Zamboanga City, the biggest transitory site, according to Zamboangeño theatre artist Kiko Miranda /Photo by Joan de Leon of Lusong



A performance at the T'boli School of Living Traditions in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato /Photo by Joan De Leon of ARTIST, Inc



The T'boli of Lake Sebu /Photo by Joan De Leon of ARTIST, Inc



Weaving at a Yakan village /Photo by Joan de Leon of Lusong



In Rio Hondo (which means “deep river”), another transitory site, very near to where the surge happened. Rio Hondo is actually inhabited by the Tausug, Yakan, Samal and Badjao from Jolo, Sulu; Basilan; and Tawi Tawi. This place has been around since before the coming of the Spaniards. /Photo by Joan de Leon of Lusong

At the grotto on a hill called Bukid Fatima, we had a bird’s eye view of the city ravaged by the disastrous storm—beautifully set in a landscape dominated by water on all sides, ethereal in the morning mist. But getting down to the coastal villages, we came upon the wreckage of ships flung inland by the mighty waves and the locals’ effort to plant mangroves as buffers against future storm surges.

In Capiz, it was heartwarming for us to see the abundance of mangroves by the shores of the progressive and bustling Roxas City.

Another recurring theme was of bells, bells that have signaled major events in the lives of the islanders, bells in Dumaguete and Madridejos, Bantayan, that warned residents of approaching pirates who would “*dagit*” or snatch the women, the bells of Balangiga that signaled the attack on the American forces in their plaza and which were taken as war booty; and the bells of Pan-ay, allegedly the biggest bell in Asia, and most of all, bells that called the “faithful” to mass and gathered them within the *visitas* and pueblos of the Spanish *reduccion*, to live *bajos de las campanas* and thus under the control of the colonial masters.

One of the most touching performances the group watched was that of the reenactment of the then 29-year-old Escalante massacre in the “agit-prop” tradition by Teatro Obrero of Escalante City, Negros Occidental. The travelers interacted with the youth actors of the group, with a lot of earnest knowledge-sharing among the travelers and performers.

Learning, Sharing, Organizing

The travelers were a “fluid” group of artists, academics and cultural workers led by organizer, project director and NCDA head Dr. Jazmin Llana. The group constantly changed from site to site, increasing or decreasing as they were joined by locals, or as members left to go back to their regular work. Most of the core travelers were executive committee members of the NCDA, joined by international/visiting scholars from the PSi global network and theater leaders in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Individual aims differed but a common desire was to learn and to share.

Fresh from her three-year training in theater at the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) Singapore, Denise Mordeno Aguilar performed the 40-minute play “Hope Floats” at the repurposed cockpit-turned-performance space Teatro Porvenir in Baclayon, Bohol, thanks to Gardy Labad.

She had previously performed the play at the Manila Fringe Festival.

“I wanted to share whatever I had learned at the ITI, and live up to its mission that artists-graduates ought to go back to their communities and help contribute significantly to theater-making processes and development,” Aguilar said.

UP professor Belen Calingacion, with Rosalie Zerrudo of NCDA and other artists eventually returned to Jao Island in Talibon, Bohol, to train teachers in the arts.

The young performers of the YATTA in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental conducted a workshop with their younger peers of Teatro Obrero, while the theater leaders of Teatrokon, Mindulani, and the Lusong Network continued to conduct training sessions in acting, directing and playwriting, and to organize network-building conventions and workshops.

Learning “modules” were in fact embedded—sometimes impromptu—in the “RoRo” activities with Paul Rae of the University of Melbourne at one point talking about performance studies and his own practice as an artist and academic. Evening reflection sessions became productive exchanges among Luzon travelers Lindsay Goss of New York University Abu Dhabi and Mary Carling and Matty Camfli of DKK, or among Visayas travelers Catherine Diamond of Soochow University and Rudy Reveche and Charles Kevin Tan of Kanlaon Theater Guild.

Dessa Quesada-Palm, artistic director of YATTA, sums up her “RoRo” experience in a nutshell: “Traveling with the RoRo team in the Visayas allowed me to appreciate the invisible thread that connects our contemporary theater praxis with our rich histories, the hard work of our elders, an ever-morphing sense of local and national identity, and the stubborn, untiring passion of artists to reflect, to imagine, and to create. Shortly after our journey, I reconnected with some of these kindred spirits in a meeting that was to be the precursor of Tabok (Cebuano for “hopping from one island to another”), a network of theater groups newly organized in the Central Visayas region.”

For Ella Parry-Davies, PhD student at King’s College London and the National University of Singapore and visiting scholar in the Mindanao “RoRo” the journey calls out for a response that she makes initially with a set of “postcards.”

“The name of the RoRo project uses the phrase ‘On Tilted Earth’ to suggest the precarious condition of life in the Philippines: in [the local language], ‘*sa tagilid na yuta*.’ But in the stressed third syllables of *sa tagilid na yutā*, the rhythmic rocking sound of the phrase (at least for the non-[the local language] speaker) contains the memory and motion of the sea even as it speaks of the land. The language of water seemed to permeate the ways in which we felt and spoke about our experiences.... Our journey through Mindanao placed us in syncopated rhythms with [...] archipelagic lives, so that there became something especially relevant about the fact of travelling as a method of research, or as a way of thinking through the movement of the space. Memories of places we had left resurfaced as we heard similar stories of conflict and displacement again and again, and as our own transitions brushed against the migrations of the islanders.... In responding to the RoRo journey with a set of seven ‘postcards,’ I have attempted to engage with [disparate economies of mobility] via a form which I hope maintains some kind of fidelity to the experience of movement and displacement,” Parry-Davies said.

One of the strongest images we encountered at the tail-end of the Visayan journey was that of an Aeta woman carrying a baby, her gaze transfixed on a fire dancer at one of the restaurants in Boracay. She seemed mesmerized by the moving flame, as we were, standing just outside of the restaurant’s strip of space on the beach, outsiders looking in. She was probably an original resident of the island, we mused, but now she was merely a spectator.

PSi#21 Philippines was co-organized by Performance Studies Philippines, the Literature Department of the College of Liberal Arts of DL-SU-Manila, the Committee on Dramatic Arts of NCCA, the College of Arts and Letters of the University of the Philippines, PETA, Teatrokon West Visayas Theater Network, Mindulani, the Leyte-Samar Heritage Society, Back to Square One, YATTA, and various universities, culture and arts institutions and groups. The Lusong Luzon Arts and Culture Network, Inc. managed the project. Check out www.fluidstates.org.

Susan Claire Agbayani is a freelance writer, publicist, media consultant, workshop facilitator, teacher, event organizer and concert producer. She is writing her thesis—the biography of a band—for an MFA degree in Creative Writing at the De La Salle University in Manila. She was the technical assistant (for marketing and public relations) of the Fluid States/RoRo Journeys project.

PERFORMANCE SCHOLARS, ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS CONVERGE IN MANILA FOR INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE STUDIES CONFERENCE

Performance scholars, artists, and cultural workers gathered for PSi#21 Philippines: On Tilted Earth: Performance, Disaster, Resilience in Archipelagic Space, the international conference of Performance Studies International (PSi) at De La Salle University Manila and University of the Philippines Diliman from November 5 to 8, 2015, for panel and roundtable discussions, keynote talks, performances and exhibitions.

Theatre Research International senior editor Dr. Paul Rae of the University of Melbourne opened the conference with a talk, "Publishing Internationally: The View from Theatre and Performance Studies."

Conference delegates were welcomed by PSi president Maaike Bleeker and DLSU vice chancellor for Research and Innovation Dr. Raymond Girard Tan and College of Liberal Arts dean Julio Teehankee, and were joined by Performatura Festival director Victor Emmanuel Carmelo D. Nadera, Jr. and DLSU Department of Literature OIC-chair Genevieve Asenjo. Talaandig artist Waway Saway rendered a special performance at the welcome program.

The keynote speakers at DLSU were Datu Migketay Victorine Saway, talking on "Land, Culture, and Security of the Indigenous People: The Talaandig Experience;" University of Wollongong Australia professor Dr. Merlinda Bobis on "*Sa Tagilid na Daga* | On Tilted Earth: A Fluid Balance;" University of Melbourne professor Dr. Paul Rae on "Performing Islands: RoRo from the Visayas to Vanuatu;" and PSi president and Utrecht University, Netherlands, professor Maaike Bleeker on "Enacting a Sense of These Things that Happened: Performance as Thought-Apparatus."

Day two opened with a plenary session on "Fluid States Philippines' RoRo Journeys: Archipelagic Encounters," a report on journeys from March to July 2015 covering 51 sites in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, which UPD professor Dr. Elena Mirano responded to.

Throughout day two, there were parallel panels on disaster, memory, media, and research, theater advocacies for resilience, performance as response to large scale trauma, displacement, encounter, and response, environmental protection in the Philippines, meditations on disaster and resilience, cultural heritage protection in times of crisis, and spiritual ecology.

DLSU's Dr. Jeremy De Chavez moderated the plenary roundtable session on "Cultures of Disaster." The speakers were DLSU's Antonio Contreras and poet Marjorie Evasco, UPD's Flaudette May Datuin, playwrights Bonifacio Ilagan and Rody Vera, and PETA's Beng Santos Cabangon.

On day three, delegates had "RoRo Journeys in the City" with visits to the Golden Mosque in Quiapo, and Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, and the Lumad Manilakbayan. Bobbi Santos Viola and Nicki Legaspi gave talks on the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista and on Quiapo. At the mosque, Ateneo de Manila professor Jose Jowel Canuday gave a talk about how the Muslim section of Quiapo and the mosque came about and, at the Manilakbayan, the group listened to a sharing on the situation of the *lumads* by Kakay Tolentino of KATRIBU. The day was capped with a performance of *Himagsik ng Huling Heneral*, a play on the life of Miguel

Malvar, written and directed by Edward Perez and performed at the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista by the Korido Theatre Ensemble of ARTIST Inc. and Kalantog. Xiao Chua of DLSU gave a prefatory talk before the show.

The conference moved to UP Diliman on day four where the delegates were welcomed at Abelardo Hall by UPD Chancellor Michael Tan, College of Arts and Letters (CAL) dean Amihan Bonifacio-Remolete, and conference organizers Eileen Legaspi-Ramirez and Belen Calingacion, with performances by Kontra-Gapi and the UP Singing Ambassadors.

Adelina Amparo III Umali moderated the keynote panel featuring Kinnari Ecological Theatre's and Soochow University, Taiwan's Catherine Diamond on "Tilting Thailand: Ro-rowing over Land and Water;" UPD's Basilio Esteban S. Villaruz on "A Score, Voice and Force: Notating Dance and the Art of Tilting"; and where the audience watched a video sent over by PSi#21 project director and University of Zagreb's Marin Blazevec.

There were parallel panels on "The Archipelago and Beyond," "Public Space Performance and the Art of Protest," and "Performance in an Ecology of Contexts."

UPD's Flaudette May Datuin moderated the closing roundtable discussion on "Performance Studies: Encounters, Engagements, Encumbrances." Speakers were Felipe Cervera of the National University of Singapore, Mick Douglas of RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, Sir Anril Tiatco of UPD, Sunita Mukhi of DLSU-College of St. Benilde, and Hayato Kosuge of Keio University, Japan. At the Abelardo Hall, various artists performed at the closing program on "Performing Resilience, Remembering Yolanda" on the second anniversary of typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

Teddy Co moderated screenings of films *Shifts* on typhoon Sendong from Cagayan de Oro and *Nick and Chai* on typhoon Yolanda in Leyte for the session "Filming Disaster and its Aftermath."

Mick Douglas, performance artist from RMIT University, Australia, performed "Salt Body" at high tide throughout the conference, evoking specific local human connections to global ecologies through the medium of salt from around the world.

Nights were capped by events of Performatura: Performing Literatures Festival of CCP's Intertextual Division.

The conference was organized by Performance Studies Philippines based at DLSU's Department of Literature, with the help of the DLSU Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, CLA Office of Research and Advanced Studies, and the Bienvenido N. Santos Creative Writing Center; the Office of the Chancellor of UPD, CAL, Department of Arts Studies and Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts, College of Music, and College of Mass Communication; the Lusong Luzon Arts and Culture Network, Inc; Back to Square One; and NCCA.

The Manila conference is the Philippine cluster of PSi#21 Fluid States: Performances of Unknowing, a distributed conference program with events in the Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe and the Americas throughout 2015 (www.fluidstates.org). Manila was its last stop.

A group of five Filipino children, three boys and two girls, are arranged in a circle, holding hands and looking up at the camera. They are wearing traditional Filipino clothing, including a blue and white striped shirt, a red and black striped shirt, and a red and black striped shirt. The children are smiling and appear to be in a joyful mood. The background is a bright, overexposed sky.

A Heritage of Well-Being

The Connectivity of the Filipino

By Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.

Un-Filipino Perspective

The moment we began to view ourselves through Western eyes, what we held sacred suddenly became worthless, our virtues turned into vices, and our strengths began to be seen as weaknesses. Anything indigenous became a source of embarrassment and uneasiness. We would hide whatever is native sounding or native in origin. Centuries of being regarded as backward and inferior by the white colonizers engendered in us this collective self-contempt, a psychic malady that afflicts all of us but most especially the elites.

Filipinos, especially the elite, became afflicted with three social pathologies which are characteristic of colonized psyches. The negative programming of colonial experience resulted in these social neuroses which Filipinos have yet to come to terms with: Cult of smallness, the Doña Victorina Syndrome, and Celebration of Defeat.

The Cult of Smallness

Representations of the Filipino seemingly encouraged by the American colonial regime were of the smallest kind. The *bahay kubo* became “very small.” The little rice bird, the *maya*, became the national bird. The tiny *sampaguita* was declared the national flower by American Governor General Frank Murphy in 1934.

Could this be an important reason why until recently many Filipino school children were expected to memorize the Latin name of, and even to be proud of having in Bikol, the smallest fish in the world? Most Filipinos then were not aware that we also have the biggest fish in the world in the same province.

Could this also be one of the psychological reasons why many Filipinos think small? Rather than become innovators, entrepreneurs, creative thinkers, producers and manufacturers, Filipinos, including graduates of elite schools, are just too happy to find employment, especially overseas.

In 1954 our government enacted a retail trade nationalization law, which took effect in 1964, preventing the Chinese from doing *tingi*, so the Chinese simply shifted from retail to the much bigger and more lucrative business of wholesale.

The “Dona Victorina” Syndrome: Low Self-Esteem Bordering on Self-Contempt

Characteristic symptoms of this “syndrome” are doubt in the Filipino capacity for achievement; perverse delight among Filipinos to constantly belittle themselves; serious lack of respect or contempt for each other; and wallowing in a negative self-image that is tantamount to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Filipinos are perhaps the worst self-bashers in the world. We are blind to our own capacities and idolize those of others, especially Westerners. If something is poorly made it must be Filipino. If it is well made it must be foreign. Even negative qualities that are universal human failings are claimed by Filipinos as distinctly Filipino, e.g., crab mentality, graft and corruption, greed, lack of discipline, etc.

The underdevelopment of Philippine society is fundamentally rooted in this chronic loss of Filipino self-esteem due to centuries of colonization and miseducation.

Yet we do not have a monopoly of human faults. Other nations, even those nations Filipinos tend to idolize, are equally, if not more stuck with negative traits that we mistakenly think to be ours alone.

American Crab Mentality

As an instance, among the poor and middle-class suburbs of Boston, like those who live on the narrow streets of Dorchester, hope is a dream, not a goal. The crab mentality pulls back on those

who try to climb their way out. Crime is the realm of the Irish, who are much like their Italian counterparts in New York but without the qualms. (From Boston, Massachusetts, *A Drink Before the War* by Dennis Lehane, published by Harper Torch; Reissue edition, April 2003).

Celebration of Defeat

The third social malady of the Filipinos is the tendency to celebrate defeats, like the Fall of Bataan, Fall of Corregidor, Fall of Tirad Pass, Capture of Aguinaldo, and Death of Rizal. Why not celebrate, instead, triumphs like The Siege of Baler, The Bells of Balangina, Cinco de Noviembre in Bago, and other victories by the Filipino revolutionaries?

A People can Only be United by the Things They Love, and Divided by the Things They Hate

Generations of contempt for Filipinos by the colonizers have been imbibed by many Filipinos themselves, especially by the ruling elites, who were most exposed to Western rule. Actually, as a research of SWS has indicated, it is this class who have the lowest regard for themselves as Filipinos, having been the most conditioned to idolize Western ways. Their low regard for Filipinos is in reality an expression of self-contempt.

Anything Positive about Themselves Always Unites a People

If we are to become one nation, we have to begin deconstructing the very negative self-images that have been ingrained in us by centuries of colonial misrule and miseducation, especially among the elites who are the power wielders and thus have the greatest responsibility to serve and be one with our people. We can never erect a viable nation if we continue to denigrate ourselves, even in the presence of foreigners.

Root Cause of Philippine Underdevelopment

We may state that the root cause of Philippine underdevelopment is our failure to tap our greatest asset for sustainable development—our cultural strengths and resources—because of our pernicious tendency towards self-bashing stemming from a colonized psyche, especially among the Westernized elite.

A Filipino Perspective

If we are to develop as a nation, we must adopt a Filipino perspective, which entails three important guideposts: building on Filipino cultural strengths; working for the good of the nation as a whole (acting locally but thinking globally), and developing pride in being Filipino. Inevitably, pride in being Filipino will deepen a sense of commitment to the nation and manifest in excellence in many aspects of Filipino life.

Cultural Identity (Core Culture or Ethnicity): The Human Resource for Development

Cultural identity is a *sine qua non* for becoming active in the world. It is the fundamental source of social empowerment and thus the basis of sustainable development. It is the unique totality of the world view and values, core principles and ideas, beliefs systems, knowledge, skills and practices, shared by a people. Rob a people of this identity and they become passive, lost, indolent, uncreative and unproductive, prone to depression and substance abuse, and plagued by a pervasive feeling of malaise and powerlessness. To

suppress and weaken this identity and successfully impose an alien culture on a people is to reduce them into a passive, docile mass subservient to the power wielders of the alien culture.

The Filipino subservience to anything Western began when the Spaniards, and more so when the Americans, forced their ethnicity or cultural values on us. As a result, we lost faith in our native intelligence and skills, treasure troves of knowledge, accumulated wisdom, original ideas and creativity and began to neglect or ignore these assets.

The Five Cultures

Most people, even in the academe, do not realize that in any society, at least five types of culture exist.

Two are fear-based or premised upon a deep sense of insecurity generated by the perception that every person has a separate being, or is an isolated self (individualism). These are the Culture of Power, a culture attached to power and privilege, control and domination and the Culture of Wealth, a culture attached to wealth and material goods, possessions, pleasure and comfort.

Another two are trust-based cultures, the trust coming from the perception that all being is one (*kapwa*) or a strong sense of community. One is the Culture of Shared Being (Culture of the Higher Self; *Pagpapakatao*). This is the culture devoted to the search for wisdom, creativity, strength of character, love and sharing - the culture of devotion to a higher cause. The other is the Culture of Simple Needs (The Practical Life), where people are mainly concerned with satisfying basic needs.

Developing the Higher Self

How many perceptions, values and skills of the culture of the higher self (the truly human level) are we able to impart thru the school system? The Filipino saying "*Madaling maging tao, mahirap magpakatao*" refers to the difficulty of developing a higher, spiritual self (*pagpapakatao*). Bringing out the truly human (higher self) in us means developing strength of character, wellness, self-control, loving kindness, wisdom, and creative intelligence.

Different Value-Orientations Promote Different Indigenous Skills

Fear-based cultures develop manipulative, aggressive attitudes and excel in fighting, military, and security skills. Trust-based cultures develop harmonious, cooperative attitudes and excel in sharing, collaboration and partnerships, including respect for ecological balance.

As long as our education remains lopsided towards narrow technological or vocational specialization, psychological insecurity and the cultures of power and wealth will prevail. We will meet very few people capable of devotion to a higher cause or serving others. What everyone needs is a thorough grounding in the humanities to inculcate reverence for human life, harmony with the ecology and a profound social concern. Narrow technocratic or vocational training alone can never promote social and ecological consciousness! We should be wary of the trend in most of our universities and colleges today to turn their institutions into merely on-the-job training schools. The dire consequence of this could be a next generation of self-centered, moral morons.

The Fifth Culture: Ethnicity or Culture as Creative Construct

The fifth culture is a society's core culture. This is Culture as

a Creative Construct. Through time a society constructs a unifying vision of life, which includes an object of devotion and a map of reality. From this arise a people's ethnicity or core values, which in turn promote the cultivation (or culturing) of skills that realize these values. UNESCO has given us the components of ethnicity, which is essentially in the realm of intangible cultural heritage, the wellspring of local genius.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as the Wellspring of Local Genius

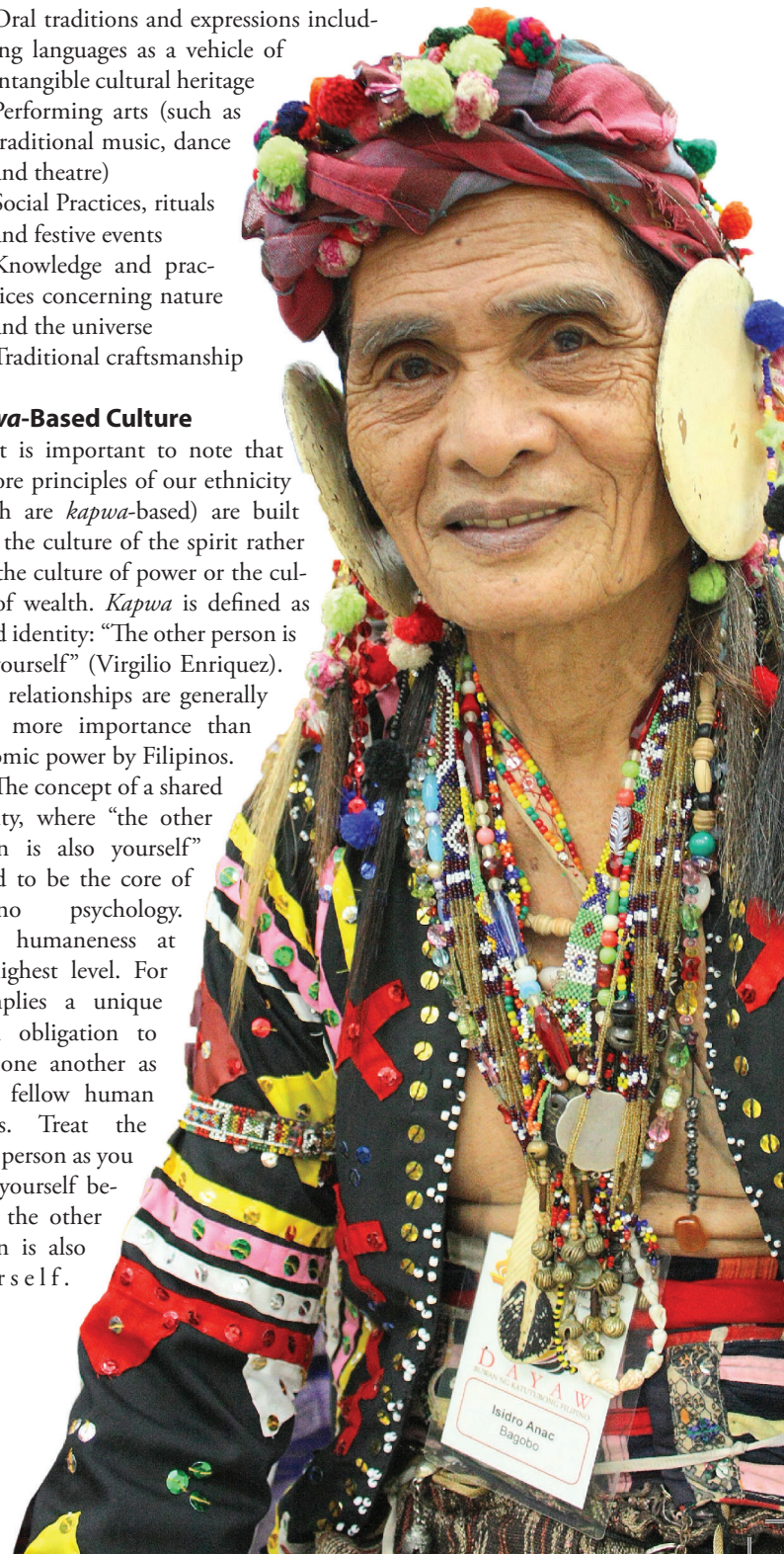
According to the UNESCO 2003 convention, ICH is the mainspring of cultural diversity and its maintenance a guarantee for continuing cultural diversity. ICH is manifested in the following domains:

- ◆ Oral traditions and expressions including languages as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage
- ◆ Performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre)
- ◆ Social Practices, rituals and festive events
- ◆ Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- ◆ Traditional craftsmanship

Kapwa-Based Culture

It is important to note that the core principles of our ethnicity (which are *kapwa*-based) are built upon the culture of the spirit rather than the culture of power or the culture of wealth. *Kapwa* is defined as shared identity: "The other person is also yourself" (Virgilio Enriquez). Thus, relationships are generally given more importance than economic power by Filipinos.

The concept of a shared identity, where "the other person is also yourself" is said to be the core of Filipino psychology. It is humaneness at the highest level. For it implies a unique moral obligation to treat one another as equal fellow human beings. Treat the other person as you treat yourself because the other person is also yourself.





Filipinos "smile most of the time, often for no reason at all, but just to connect to others." /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

This is a Filipino core idea that could very well be a rationale for the Golden Rule in the world's great religions. *Kapwa* is an awareness of the rootedness of each one of us in the One Divine Essence within. Among the ancient Yucatan Mayans of Mexico, there is a strikingly similar notion of being, as expressed in the Yucatan Mayan Code of Honor: "I am another yourself."

"If There is no Other, There is No War"

In Filipino psychology, there is no concept of the "other" in the other person. The "other" (*kapwa*) is also yourself. This makes Filipinos a highly relational and essentially non-confrontational people, as monumentally demonstrated in the peaceful "EDSA Revolution." A Croatian philosopher, Ivana Milojevic, categorically said that "if there is no 'other' there is no war."

An Affirmation of the Ultimate Oneness of Humanity

Unlike *pakikisama*, *pakikipagkapwa* has no negative connotation. The more one engages in it, the more the goodness in the persons involved is evoked from within. Thus *kapwa* is an inner principle of shared goodness. Through the revelation of our potential for shared goodness, the process of *kapwa* affirms and recognizes the ultimate oneness of humankind.

Principle of Integration

Pakikipagkapwa, in principle, excludes any action that may be detrimental or harmful to other human beings. It is "definitely inconsistent with exploitative human transactions." It is the capacity to recognize the good in every human being and integrate oneself within the widest social fabric.

Barking at the Wrong Tree

When we blame Filipino ethnicity or core culture for its so-called deficiencies and negative qualities—like crab-mentality, abusive family dynasties and endemic corruption—these are actually manifestations of the deep-seated, universal addiction or greed for power and wealth. Indeed, according to Walden Bello, corruption is worse in many other countries. But why is it that we do not blame their (ethnic) culture for this?

Neglect of Culture in Government Policy-Making

We even go so far as to fault our culture for the seemingly perennial state of Philippine underdevelopment. Yet it is actually the neglect or ignorance of our (ethnic) culture that is the problem. The core principles of Filipino indigenous psychology are built on the highly spiritual concept of *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, humaneness, *delicadeza*, and transcending narrow self-interest (*kagandahang loob*).

Philippine Social Ills Rooted in Culture of Power and Culture of Wealth

We may be guilty of inaccurate observation and analysis if we ostracize Filipino (ethnic) culture for the ills of Philippine society, which are rooted more in our elites' (upper classes') intervention in the development process. These are the elites, who, since the Spanish period, have been addicted to the culture of power and culture of wealth. Just forty elite families are alleged to be in control of 76 percent of our nation's wealth.

Need for Culturally-rooted Governance

Precisely, it is the glaring absence in governance of the noble

or even sublime principles of our core culture (ethnicity) that is at the very root of our nation's ills. What we sorely need is culturally-rooted governance, which is practiced only in exceptional cases, as in the much-appreciated term of the late Sec. Jesse Robredo as mayor of Naga City.

Culture, the "Genius of a People"

Every culture is unique. No two cultures are identical. Every culture, being unique, has a strength no other culture has; this is its gift or genius. Having distinctive strengths, cultures cannot be considered superior or inferior, just different. For instance, Japanese culture's "genius" is skill in precision-work down to the micro level; the Chinese have always been good in the practical arts (or skills for practical living); the Germans have been geniuses in fitting parts together in a harmonious order resulting in great strength and durability.

The Filipino Genius

If the core culture of our people assumes that we are all one, that all things are interconnected (The concept of *kapwa*), then our highest values will be connectedness, sharing, spirituality, *pakikipagkapwa*, *kagandahang-loob* and *pakikiramdam*. Realizing these values makes us highly skilled or "geniuses" in genuine connectivity, expressiveness, communicativeness, balancing opposites, flexibility, creativity and wellness.

We can draw upon the outstanding cultural strengths of our ethnicity to formulate a vision for the nation. Essentially, we can tap our *kapwa*-based genius for human connectivity and soulfulness as a people. We are perhaps the most highly relational in the world, with superb skills in healing and balancing polar energies, and passion for creative, participatory processes.

Clueless on Filipino Cultural Gifts

But many of our government officials and media practitioners are almost clueless about Filipino cultural gifts. We find our culture trivialized as a purveyor of fun and entertainment, and anthropologically empty conjectures that our culture is a "mixture or hodge-podge of Malay, Chinese, Spanish and American influences."

Philippine Ethnicity is a Unified, Coherent Whole

On the contrary, our shared cultural heritage is a set of philosophically and ideologically coherent set of premises and corresponding value-orientations, resulting in well-defined skills and patterns of behaviour that can make us truly proud of ourselves.

Indigenous Filipino Skills/Intelligence

Among these are our superior linguistic and communication skills, expressiveness, prowess in the performing arts, high degree of gender equality, psychic health, strong sense of humour, ability to rebound after trying times, nurturing qualities, interpersonal intelligence, social networking skills, excellence in service industries, strong family ties, passion for education, and creative versatility.

Filipinos Love to Connect, Especially to People

Among the most highly relational in the world, Filipinos are hardly alone. They are happy being together - when they eat, sleep, work, travel, pray, create or celebrate. They feel connected to the world, God and nature, but most of all to people. "*Walang gustong maiwanan sa kodakan.*"

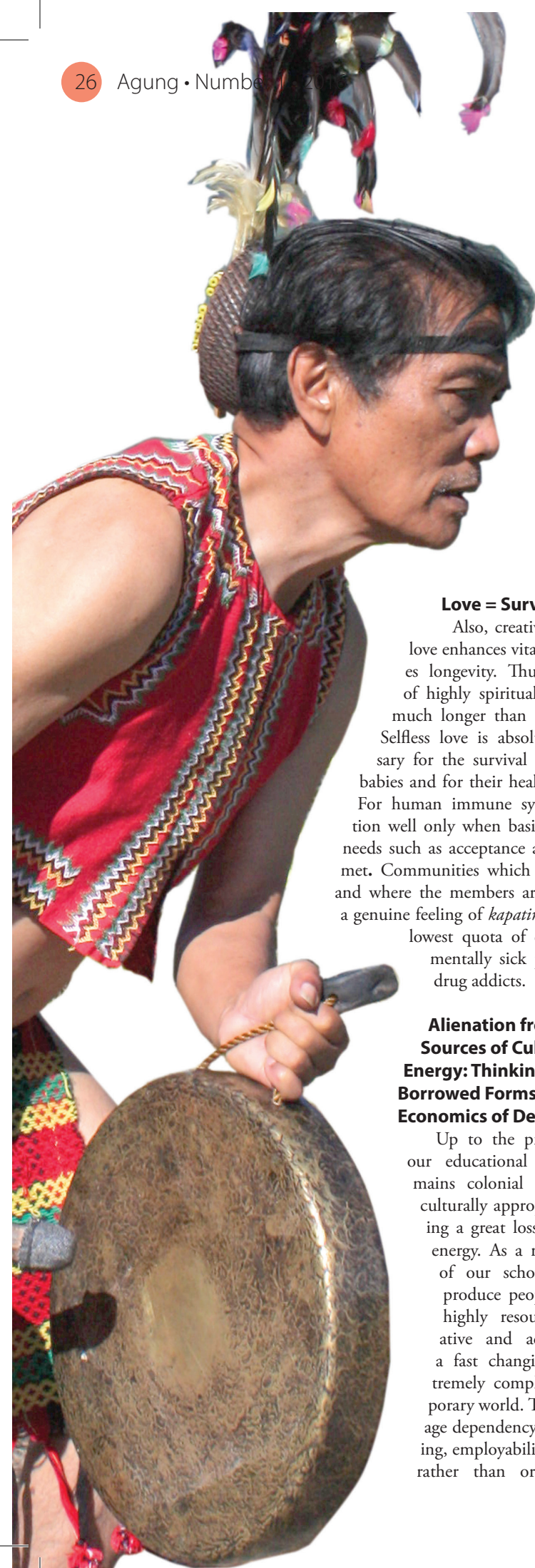
Togetherness is Happiness

Filipinos hardly eat alone. Invite a person to your party, how many will come? Our hospital wards always have an extra bed because our sick relatives always have a *bantay*. We smile most of the time, often for no reason at all, but just to connect to others. Eagerness for connections makes us number one in social networking in the world. For sometime now, we have been the texting, Facebook, and selfie capital of the world.

Loners More Prone to Heart Disease

Our core culture of human connectivity gives us an edge over other peoples in matters of health and well-being. Medical science has observed that people with lots of friends are usually the healthiest in the world. Lack of friends and close social ties are the hidden cause of heart disease. As social ties increase, mortality rates decrease. Married people, members of religious groups and the like often live longer. Social isolation breeds depression, which may lead to lower immunity to disease and even suicide.





Love = Survival

Also, creative, unselfish love enhances vitality, increases longevity. Thus, the lives of highly spiritual people are much longer than the average. Selfless love is absolutely necessary for the survival of newborn babies and for their healthy growth. For human immune systems function well only when basic emotional needs such as acceptance and love are met. Communities which preach love and where the members are united by a genuine feeling of *kapatiran* yield the lowest quota of delinquents, mentally sick persons and drug addicts.

Alienation from Our Sources of Cultural Energy: Thinking in Borrowed Forms and the Economics of Dependency

Up to the present time, our educational system remains colonial rather than culturally appropriate, causing a great loss of cultural energy. As a result, many of our schools do not produce people who are highly resourceful, creative and adaptable to a fast changing and extremely complex contemporary world. They encourage dependency, a job-seeking, employability mentality rather than originality of

thought, entrepreneurial qualities and self-reliance on native skills, knowledge and strengths.

The Power of Indigenous Thought

Harnessing our own minds, understandings, definitions, categories and concepts is certainly to have confidence, power and control over our own lives. Economic power naturally follows from this. For instance, if we worship alien ideas of beauty—whose art works, music, fashion models and beauty products do we glorify and spend for? If we do not develop our indigenous pharmacology and healing modalities, how much do we spend for imported drugs and medicines?

Cultural Strengths that We Can Promote and Use as a Resource for Nation-Building and Sustainable Development

What are the specific cultural strengths that we can promote and use as a resource for nation-building and sustainable development? Being number one in expressiveness makes us excellent performing artists. Our genius in human connectivity gives us a great advantage in communication. We have superior facility for languages. We can be very adept in all forms of social media and ICT skills. Our curiosity about people is the basis of our wanderlust and passion for travel and mobility—the driver of tourism.

Filipinos, at their best, are a highly nurturing, caring, sharing people, with a strong maternal orientation, and definitely not loners. Because of our prowess in interpersonal communication and a nurturing, caring attitude, we excel in the service professions or industry.

Devotion to the Home and Family

Filipino popular culture is the culture of devotion to the family and sanctity of the home, the family being our source of happiness because connectedness to one another is strongest within the family, especially in the mother-child connection. Perhaps the reason for the Philippines' having the longest Christmas celebration in the world (from Sept to Jan) is the appropriation of the Mother Mary-Baby Jesus bond as mythical symbol of the sacred mother-child relationship in Filipino popular culture. In the same vein, we revere ancestors and the ancestral house has become a symbol of family continuity and stability.

Identifying Filipino Strengths

If Filipinos love to connect to people, then they will enjoy and excel in activities and making things that bring people together. The more an object, activity, or idea connects people to one another, the more Filipinos delight in it. Filipinos are very creative in things that bring people together, like furniture. Filipino furniture design is recognized internationally.

The Philippines is the World's Most Emotional Country

According to an international study, "the heavily Catholic, Southeast Asian nation, a former colony of Spain and the U.S., scores well above second-ranked El Salvador, which is not even close." Singapore is the least emotional country in the world.

"Singaporeans recognize they have a problem," Bloomberg Businessweek writes of the country's "emotional deficit," citing a culture in which schools "discourage students from thinking of themselves as individuals."

Countries Where People Feel the Most Loved

In another study to find out where the people feel most loved, the three countries with the very highest scores are, in this order, the Philippines (93 percent), Rwanda (92 percent) and Puerto Rico (90 percent). The region that appears to experience the most love is Latin America, followed by Southeast Asia and Western Europe.

Countries Where People Feel the Least Loved

Countries where the people feel the least loved, according to the study, are mostly former Soviet republics: Russia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus region all consistently scored poorly. Interestingly, those countries also tend to have very high smoking rates. Other low-scoring countries included Burma/Myanmar, Yemen, and three African states: Ethiopia, Chad and Morocco.

Filipinos Like to Experience the Multidimensional Wholeness of Life

Filipinos do not like a partial, fragmented view of life. We respond to life synergistically, that is, a cooperative action of all the senses, faculties, or levels of being. That is why a Filipino is not happy just knowing another person's name. He would also inquire about his work, hometown, relatives, marital status, even his salary!

We do not like to belong to only one side of a relationship because it is incomplete. Our kinship system is bilateral. For most parents, having two kids is enough as long as they are a boy and a girl. If not, the number of children may multiply indefinitely until the desired balance is attained.

In hosting shows, Filipinos traditionally pair a man and a woman rather than just have one or the other as in Western countries. The West is beginning to catch on but mixed gender hosting is still a novelty in the U.S.

Our desire for wholeness is very much reflected in gender equality in Filipino society, which is the highest in Asia-Pacific and one of the highest in the world. In the World Ranking of Women in Managerial Positions, we are always in the top ten.

Our holistic logic makes us psychologically healthy, relatively stress-free and not prone to depression and neurosis. We know how to balance the opposites of animus and anima, as strongly embodied in our myth of the first man and woman, Si Ka Lak and Si Ka Bay, emerging from a bamboo tube fully grown and absolutely equal, at least in principle.

Filipinos are Highly Participatory

Filipinos demand collective, equal participation in decision-making and self-determination. No one must have a monopoly of the decision-making process. In Filipino society, everybody is a participant or performer. Nobody likes to be a mere spectator. Thus, we prefer consensus as a mode of reaching decisions or settling conflicts. In this participatory culture, the norm is *pantay-pantay*, *walang lamangan*, *pagbibigayan* or sharing, interdependence, equitable distribution of resources. Violate this norm and pandemonium will ensue. Discipline in Philippine society is premised on fairness and justice. The privilege of one must be the privilege of all. Equal application of the law is a must.

Development as the Proliferation of Options

The deepest social aspirations of the Filipino are freedom, jus-

tice, and dignity. Monopoly, dictatorship and the curtailment of choices are anathema. Decision-making is participatory.

Arrogance is a No-no

The Filipino concept of *kapwa* (shared identity/goodness) and non-duality of life make people absolutely equal in principle and nobody has a right to regard himself as above or more important than others. Humility is highly-prized, at least outwardly. Even Manny Pacquiao is very modest about his skills. After his world title victory over Briton Rick Hatton, he said, "I'm just lucky... I hit first. A right hook."

A Healing Culture: Life as a Celebration

- ◆ We are highly relational; social interconnectedness leads to longevity
- ◆ Expressiveness, especially through music and dance, releases harmful emotions
- ◆ Everyday creativity promotes well-being
- ◆ Touching as a way of life increases immunity to disease
- ◆ Deep belief in God makes Filipinos optimistic and provides meaning to life
- ◆ Strong sense of humor and joy of life enable us to rebound easily from any tragedy

Promoting the Local but Thinking National or Global: Human Communities, not the State, are the Ultimate Actors in the Development Process

We have to encourage celebration of the unique cultural identities of our cultural communities through various activities and expressive forms to provide for communication and sustainable development. Failure to do this may lead to violence, deviant behavior, depression, and suicide. Positive programs can encourage harmony and engagement in society. Underlying these programs is the attitude of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. A nation's development, then, can be viewed as proceeding along apparently divergent directions, one, towards a shared cultural universe at the national level and two, towards the greatest possible intra-cultural diversity at the local level.

Social Self-Images as Self-Fulfilling:

The Need to Develop a Strong Shared Vision

It is the image a people create of themselves that is the psycho-cultural basis of their strengths and weaknesses, triumphs and failures. For a nation's self-image tends to be self-fulfilling (Kenneth Boulding, *The Image*). If in our minds we think we will be defeated, we have already lost. If we think we are an inferior people, we will tend to lower our standards and be satisfied with good enough. Negative self-images, whether individual or collective, can cause untold social and cultural damage.

Social Self-Images as Self-Fulfilling: The Need to Develop a Strong Shared Vision

We have nothing to lose by creating and working for the most exalted and inspiring images of ourselves, especially because we are a highly relational, holistic, participatory and creative people with a strong nurturing and caring orientation.

Felipe M. De Leon, Jr. is the chairman of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. He is a professor of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines where he taught humanities, aesthetics, music theory and Philippine art and culture, and a lecturer on social transformation courses at the Asian Social Institute. His experience as a cultural administrator/manager is extensive and widely recognized. De Leon, Jr. is the son of National Artist for music Felipe Padilla de Leon, Sr. and the father of musician Diwa De Leon and multi-awarded triathlon athlete Ani De Leon.

Socio-Cultural Activities and Issues Tackled at the BIMP-EAGA Strategic Planning Meeting



The BIMP-EAGA Strategic Planning was held from February 24 to 26, 2016, at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City, attended by NCCA OIC-executive director Adelina M. Suemith, who headed the working group on socio-cultural development. /Photos by the Mindanao Development Authority

Over 300 participants from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines joined the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Strategic Planning held from February 24 to 26, 2016, at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City.

The strategic planning meeting focused on the socio-cultural pillar, which deals with the promotion of more people to people, education and cultural exchanges in the sub-region. Aside from the socio-cultural pillar, the BIMP-EAGA has eight other working clusters: agri-business, transport connectivity, power, ICT, trade and investment facilitation, tourism and environment.

During the meeting the socio-cultural cluster was divided into two working groups: the human resource development (HRD), which deals on education and technical skills, and the socio-cultural development (SCD), which focuses on culture. The latter was headed by the NCCA, represented by its OIC-executive director Adelina M. Suemith.

For the SCD group, the meeting started with a review of the summary report on the October 2015 SCE meeting held in General Santos City. During the meeting, Malaysia pointed out that apart from the academe, there are other sources of skills and education such as the practitioners who may not be based in the academe but who are experts and knowledgeable on certain skills that could be tapped to harness human capital. The group

also agreed on the importance of museums and archives as sources of information in developing human capital.

On the challenges, Malaysia added that there are cross-cultural issues arising from similarity in cultures that need to be addressed by the member countries such as the intellectual property rights of each country.

To have a clear plan on the activities to be implemented in 2016, the group also reviewed the goal and objectives that were agreed upon by the participants during the previous SCE meeting. This goal centered on the people-to-people connectivity in the BIMP-EAGA, with the objectives to inculcate deeper appreciation of the BIMP-EAGA culture and heritage, to increase contribution to the socio-economic development through socio-cultural activities, and to increase the number of recognized cultural heritage in the region.

To achieve the objectives, the group laid out various strategies such as promotion, preservation and sustainability of the BIMP-EAGA culture and heritage, increase in the number of BIMP-EAGA-wide socio-cultural events, and conducting and publishing of researches on culture and heritage.

During the meeting, the group decided to create a Budayaw Council to oversee the implementation of the SCD projects which they have agreed upon. The plan of activities for 2016 and 2017 includes participation at the Sabah International Folklore Festival

in July 2016 where the Philippines will be sending a delegation of dancers. Invitation from Sabah State Cultural Board has been received and will be coursed through Mindanao Development Authority (Minda).

Another activity will be the Budayaw: BIMP-EAGA Festival, which is exclusively for the practitioners of the four member countries. It will be held in the Philippines in 2017, in connection with the celebration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) fiftieth anniversary.

There will also be a roundtable discussion on BIMP-EAGA history/exhibition, which will be held in Kuching, Sarawak, in October 2016. This event will be coordinated by the Sarawak Office for Culture and Sports. Experts from each country will participate, while the papers and proceedings will be published in *Budayaw*, the publication of the BIMP-EAGA activities.

The group will undertake the mapping of practitioners in the region. This will help in creating a database and inventory of artists and cultural organizations in the region. They welcome new publications, such as video documentary, journal, monograph, coffee table book and brochures, which will contain the culture, ethnicity and heritage of the region. In December 2016, the group will hold the biannual Friendship Games in Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Philippine Sports Commission will organize the Philippine participation.



Hypnosis (oil on canvas, 48 by 96 inches)

A Fine Journey

Renowned fine-print artist Fil Delacruz displayed several works for “PARA/PHRASE: An Artist’s Journey in Fine Print and Painting” at the NCCA Gallery from November 5 to 30, 2015.

According to him, “*Paraphrase* means ‘restatement of the meaning of a text or passage using other words.’ The term itself is derived via Latin *paraphrasis*, meaning ‘additional manner of expression.’ By reinter-

preting my previous fine prints into paintings for this exhibition, it is my intention to showcase a review of my body of works, my present experimentation and evolution as an artist. This show is not a retrospective, but an introspection of my never-ending artistic journey that is still in the process of constant evolution and discovery.”

The exhibition showed Delacruz’s transformation. His creations in fine print

in mezzoprint style were transmuted into another medium—oil—but still bearing the essence and the spirit of his artistry. His art is inspired by indigenous elements and the ethnic beauty of the B’laan. The southern spirit of his B’laan muse, Gunsal Malayo, is a recurring element in his works such as *Thanatopsis*, a fine print he made in honor of the dying “goddess.” In the 2015 transmutation of his previous fine-print into oil-based paintings, Delacruz carries the spirit of Malayo.

From the Fringe and the Outskirts



Fringe Manila returned to the NCCA Gallery for its second year with the exhibit “Outskirts,” premiering the works of Philippines-based German filmmaker Manuel Domes, returning artist from Brazil Paulo Abe (*The Banned Library*, Fringe Manila and NCCA’s “UnderEXPOSED”) and TALA Photo Collective, a diverse group of Filipino women photographers established in 2014.

On view from February 11 to 28, 2016, the exhibit delved into the sectors of Manila’s marginalized communities. Through

distinctive mediums—short documentary, interactive installation and photography/photojournalism—Domes, Abe and TALA questioned the collective qualifications societies impose to make sense out of certain accepted normative behaviors. Though reflected in laws, traditions and even faith, this show sought to identify anomalies in the viewers’ perspectives, or perhaps manufactured realities, and challenged the world’s notion of gender equality, the truths of poverty, as well as victims and perpetrators of violence.

The creation of the NCCA Gallery dedicated to contemporary arts was a joint initiative of the National Committee on Visual Arts (NCVA) and the National Committee on Art Galleries (NCAG). Through the establishment of the gallery, both committees envision to help young artists get their much needed exposure without hampering their zest to explore new tendencies on the edge of current art making. The new gallery is outfitted to accommodate video works and movable panels for installation pieces. Contemporary artists are welcome to submit their exhibit concept along with their portfolio should they wish to exhibit at the gallery. The NCCA Gallery is at the ground floor of the NCCA Building, 633 General Luna Street, Intramuros, Manila. It is open 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday to Friday. Visits on weekends and holidays are by appointment. For details, contact 527-2192 loc. 512 and look for Bryan Llapitan or Mimi Santos; or email nccagallery09@gmail.com.



By Maria Glaiza Lee

Susan Calo-Medina

Honored with the Dangal ng Haraya Award

Known as the “Queen of Philippine Travel,” Susan Calo-Medina had been the pioneer in travel show, hosting the longest-running (which spanned 27 years) and award-winning travel show *Travel Time*. Following the principle “*Huwag maging dayuhan sa sariling bayan*,” she had dedicated her whole life in championing Philippine tourism, exploring the beauty of the country and

highlighting the culture and traditions of each destination.

The NCCA posthumously honored her with the Dangal ng Haraya award for her patronage of arts and culture on January 7, 2016, at the Old Senate Hall of the National Museum of the Philippines. The lead cultural agency recognized the “legacy of the lady who brought the world to the Filipino, and brought the Philippines to every home.”

This award is usually given to Filipino individuals and groups to recognize their outstanding lifetime achievements that have made great impacts and significant contributions to Philippine culture and arts.

During the awarding ceremony, NCCA chairman Felipe M. de Leon Jr. praised the late journalist for her contributions to the Philippine arts and culture and reminisced her days as committee member, saying that she had been so dedicated to her work, traveling all over the country to search for outstanding Filipino traditional artists who could be named *Manlilikha ng Bayan*.

Anthropologist and NCCA consultant Dr. Jesus Peralta shared some fond memories of his good friend and former colleague. There was a time when she arrived at the committee meeting, indignant and very angry, asking who put a shop of ethnic products at the NCCA lobby. It was the idea of David Baradas. After the meeting, Dr. Peralta approached Calo-Medina and told her to apologize to Baradas who was present during her outburst. “She told me, ‘I thought it was you.’ I didn’t know how to handle that,” shared Dr. Peralta.

Dr. Peralta also shared how the late journalist encouraged her to accept speaking



Susan Calo-Medina's three children, Consuelo, Marcos and Luisa, accepted the Dangal ng Haraya award in her behalf from NCCA chairman Felipe M. de Leon Jr. and OIC-executive director Adelina Suemith. /Photo by Marvin Alcaraz

engagements, telling him that “maybe, you are not a good speaker, but you are a good researcher.” He added: “Wisdom in keeping quiet when you don’t know anything about something—she taught me that.”

Accepting the Dangal ng Haraya award in behalf of Calo-Medina was her son Marcos Medina, who thanked the NCCA for the awards. “Susan Calo-Medina belonged to the nation. This award would have probably made her uneasy. There was no public figure or private person in her. She was always herself. What you saw was what you get. She always spoke her mind, generously interested in what you say or do. She never underestimated the Filipino understanding,” he said.

Witnessing the awarding ceremony were National Artist Ramon Santos, NCCA OIC-executive director Adelina Suemith, former Department of Tourism Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque, Bambi Harper, National Museum director Jeremy Barns and assistant director Ana Labrador, among others. Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, who was the favorite group performer of Calo-Medina, provided entertainment for the attendees.

Born in Agusan, Calo-Medina took up Education at the Assumption College and taught Philippine government to students, including former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and director Maria Montelibano. She wrote columns for the newspapers *The Observer*, *Today* and *Malaya*.

After she finished her Masters in Speech and Drama at Catholic University in Washington, D.C, she would act in productions of the late National Artist for theater and literature Rolando Tinio, and even produced plays in the 1970s and 1980s.

She was a former member of the NCCA’s National Committee on Communication, Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, as well as the Gawad ng Manlilikha ng Bayan committee. She also had a short stint as marketing director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. She had also partnered with the Department of Tourism and initiated the training of Filipino tour guides, collectively known as Mabuhay Guides.

She passed away because of a heart attack on January 9, 2015, at the age of 73. She is survived by her three children, Consuelo, Marcos and Luisa, son-in-law John Crack, and grandchildren Sophia and Samuel. Her husband Johnny Medina, whom she married in 1965, passed away in 2014.



THE PHILIPPINES AND OMAN SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON CULTURAL COOPERATION

The Philippines and Oman signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation on February 2, 2016, in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Felipe M. De Leon, Jr., chairman of the NCCA, and Sheikh Hamad Bin Hilal Al-Ma’amari, Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, signed the agreement within the context of the Second Philippines-Oman Joint Bilateral Consultation Meeting (JBCM) hosted by the Sultanate.

The agreement will seek to strengthen the cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries through the various expressions of the arts, preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of traditional crafts, cooperation between libraries and visits of artists and experts in these fields.

MAGTEASA KAY AETA FESTIVAL IN GUIMARAS

Since their resettlement, it became challenging for the Ati of Guimaras to uphold and revitalize their own customs and traditions. Being resettled in five separate villages in Nueva Valencia, Sibunag, Kati-Kati in Jordan, Buenavista and San Lorenzo, it has become difficult for them to gather and celebrate as one community. Mindful of the dislocation impacting on their traditions, the Tarog Ati Community Association took the initiative to gather the Ati people who were resettled in different locations to showcase their indigenous culture and traditions.

Called Magteasa Kay Aeta Festival, the gathering was held from May 28 to 29, 2015, at the *sitio* of Tarog in Poblacion, Nueva Valencia, with an aim of recovering, revitalizing and saving their culture and traditions. It was held in a resettlement site for around 30 Ati families.

About 300 Ati from the other resettlement villages came to the event. Gracing the event were guests from Iloilo local government and provincial agencies, along with five international guests who are members of the Negrito Festival and Bread of the Word.

The program started with a thanksgiving ritual performed by the Ati women of Tarog

and youth from Iloilo, followed by a welcome speech by Tarog chief Joseph Elosendo. The young people of Kati-Kati, Jordan, resettlement area performed an Ati common dance, a monkey dance and modern popular songs.

The adult members conducted a cooking demonstration, presenting local dishes such as rice in bamboo tubes, grilled turtle, snake, giant bats and monitor lizards, among others. The local hilots shared their knowledge on herbal medicines that the Ati people use in their communities.

The children played native games such as sungay sa buko, a race game where the participants use their heads to push a coconut to the finish line, and the hunting monitor lizard game in which participants try to catch a lizard running in the field. The Ati elders meanwhile shared their traditional knowledge on building a fire and making bath soaps from tree barks, while the Ati women sang improvised songs.

The following day, four leaders gathered for consultation with a Dutch social worker, who has been working towards the reintegration and unity of Negritos in the Philippines, hoping to organize a Negrito Festival where Aetas across Central Luzon can meet for dialogue and cultural exchange.

During the consultation, the Aeta members shared problems they are facing including dislocation from their ancestral domain, discrimination from Iloilo settlers, migrants and tourists, lack of education initiatives for transmission of Ati traditional systems of governance and traditions, the health policy banning traditional birthing methods, and lack of access to basic services, among others.— **Jonna Melody Lerio**

THE MINDANAO REGIONAL MUSEUM SUMMIT

The Xavier Center for Culture and the Arts (XCCA) and the Mindanao Association of Museums (MAM) understand what museum work entails. International Council of Museums (ICOM) president Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz said, “Museums, as educators and cultural mediators, are adopting an increasingly vital role in contributing to the definition and implementation of sustainable development and practices.”

Dr. Hinz added that “Museums must be able to guarantee their role in safeguarding cultural heritage, given the increasing precariousness of ecosystems, situations of political instability, and the associated natural and man-made challenges that may arise. Museum work through education and exhibitions, for example, should strive to create a sustainable society. We must do everything we can to ensure that museums are part of the cultural driving force for the sustainable development of the world.”

To further foster consciousness, awareness and appreciation of Filipino culture, heritage and history among museum workers in Mindanao, MAM and XCCA conducted the Mindanao Regional Museum Summit 2015 at the Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, from May 27 to 20, 2015.

MAM has always been active in ensuring that the museum workers in the region are updated in the latest strategies in museums management. Attended by 55 participants, the museum summit was geared towards developing and improving the capabilities of the museum workers in creating exhibits, handling objects and artifacts and managing disaster risks. Bahay Tsino’s Meah Ang See and Ayala Museum’s Aprille Tijam discussed and facilitated the workshops on basic museology, object acquisition, documentation, cataloguing, and curating an exhibition. —**Carolle Adrienne Manalastas**

THE NORTHERN LUZON REGIONAL MUSEUM SUMMIT

When the Baguio Museum organized in July 2014 the exhibit-seminar/workshop “Photo Exhibit of the Museum of the North,” the turnout was promising. The museum, headed by its chairman Nicolas Tabora, decided to host a summit to foster strong relations and facilitate exchange of ideas on museum work among museum workers in the region.

Held from July 1 to 3, 2015, the Northern Luzon Regional Museum Summit hoped to hone 47 participants on museum management, marketing strategies and sustainability through lectures and workshops.

According to Gemma Estolas, assistant curator of the Baguio Museum, twenty-two museums in northern Luzon were represented in the summit, including Bencab Museum in Benguet; Museo de Bacarra in Ilocos Norte; National Museum’s Kiangnan, Ifugao and Kabayan, Benguet branches; and St. Louis University Museum of Arts and Culture in Baguio City.

NCCA’s National Committee on Museums (NCOM) head Amado Alvarez talked about the “Museum Challenges for the 21st Century”; while architect Mel Andino discussed “Vigan: A Living Museum.” Estolas elaborated on the “Strategical Approaches of Museum Educators and Administrators to Issues.” Baguio Museum executive director Stella de Guia explained about “Linkages,

Websites, Social Media and Marketing Approaches of Museums.” —**Carolle Adrienne Manalastas**

THE SOUTHERN LUZON REGIONAL MUSEUM SUMMIT

Because Luzon is home to some of the country’s heroes such as Emilio Aguinaldo, Apolinario Mabini and Jose Rizal, among others, it is not surprising that most museums in this island cluster are dedicated to them and showcase historical and cultural artifacts. But maintaining and curating a museum is a daunting task. Museum workers need perseverance and dedication.

The Southern Luzon Association of Museums (SLAM), together with the city government of Batangas City, organized the Southern Luzon Regional Museum Summit from September 23 to 24, 2015, at the Gov. Modesto Castillo Memorial Cultural Center in Tanauan City, Batangas.

Gracing the event were Tanauan City mayor Antonio C. Halili and his councilors, SLAM president Cecille T. Gelicame and project coordinator Angelina L. Amat, among others.

During the two-day seminar-workshop, fifty participants worked on honing their abilities in museum management, particularly creating and putting exhibits and museums education programs, through various lectures conducted by resource speakers.

Through his lecture, “Museum Mission and Visioning,” Yuchengco Museum’s Amado Alvarez helped the participants conceptualize the mission and vision statement of their respective museums, as well as identify their museums’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. He encouraged the participants to not allow threats such as lack of support and funding and having few exhibit materials, to limit them, but instead turn them into opportunities.

Prof. Cecille De La Paz, meanwhile, discussed creating museum education programs and making initiatives to push their mission-vision statement. During the cultural mapping workshop, she asked the participants to list down the cultural icons in their area, and using them, come up with activities they can implement in their museum.

After his lecture on how to put up an exhibition, Kenneth Esguerra tasked the participants to come up with an exhibit where all the museums in Southern Luzon will join. One of the suggestions was to have a traveling exhibit on food since the cuisines of South Luzon is relatively not well-known.

The participants then identified local delicacies and dishes found in their provinces and even shared how they are prepared. Esguerra suggested that they include the history of each dish so that people will know its background and how it came to be. During the open forum, the participants discussed

and exchanged ideas on sponsorships, venue for the exhibit and getting support from the local government. —**Carolle Adrienne Manalastas**

THE SELABOK FESTIVAL OF KUMALARANG, ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

The town of Kumalarang in Zamboanga del Sur is home to the Subanen and Maguindanao ethnic groups. It is said that Muslims and lumads live in harmony here, and to celebrate this unity, the local government of Kumalarang spearheaded the Selabok Festival.

Established in 2009, the annual festival showcases the Subanen and Maguindanaoan arts and crafts. From August 24 to 26, 2015, it was held coinciding with the 56th founding anniversary of Kumalarang.

When it was first conceptualized, the festival focused on introducing Subanen culture to other sectors of society, resulting in the integration of the plans and programs geared towards unification of all sectors in the municipality. The inclusion of the Maguindanaoan community started when the NCCA started funding the festival.

Today, the festivity aims to promote traditional Subanen and Maguindanaoan cultures to better understand their ways of life, beliefs and practices. Through various activities of the festival, the community would be able to preserve and promote their rich culture, as well as develop a sense of appreciation on the culture and practices of different people living in the community.

The festival kicked off with the *mepan miluansan* ritual, performed by the Balian, at the newly constructed Subanen Hall in the evening of August 23. For this year, the organizers decided to celebrate two separate days for the Subanen and the Maguindanaoan to ensure that both indigenous communities would be equally highlighted.

The Subanen Day opened with an exhibit featuring the products and crafts made by Subanen artisans. Most products displayed were outputs of the School of Living Traditions and Masters Creation programs of the NCCA. The first day of the celebration featured Subanen dances, songs and traditional cuisines. Gracing the opening were mayor Eugenio Salva Jr., vice mayor Allan Damas, NCIP Region IX’s Timuey Woy Lim Wong, Council of Tribal Leaders chairperson Bae Nora Andus, provincial board member Miguelito Ocapan, Sangguniang Barangay member Japar Taib and Barangay Poblacion captain Datu Onan Dacula. Other guests included *barangay* officials and community members from the different *barangays* in Kumalarang.

For the Moro Day celebration, the activities included the *kulintangan* contest, *pangalay* dance competition, *sipa sa manggis*, and the Search for Miss Kumalarang. The pageant highlighted the traditional clothes of both indigenous groups. —**Joseph Patrick Lee**

IN MEMORIAM



Helen Lacna Lumbos

Blaan Artisan, Cultural Worker and Community Leader

Blaan artisan, community leader and cultural worker Helen Lacna Lumbos passed away February 6, 2016, due to kidney failure. Founding president of the Lamlifew Tribal Women's Association (LTWA) and ardent promoter of Blaan culture, Lumbos helped set up the Lamlifew Village Museum in her home community of Lamlifew in the *barangay* of Datal Tampal, Malungon, Sarangani, the only community-initiated and -maintained museum in the country. The museum helps preserve traditional culture of the Blaan, one of the indigenous ethnic groups of southwestern Mindanao, concentrated in the provinces of Sarangani and South Cotabato, so that younger generations of Blaan learn more about and take pride in their culture. The museum is also a conduit for the community to share their culture to the outside world.

Lumbos was born on February 9, 1971, in Glamang, Polomolok, South Cotabato, to the late Monching Lacna and Herminia Lacna. She was the eldest of 10 children of Blaan, Tboli and Kalagan ethnicities. She started school at Glamang Elementary School and transferred and graduated from Malandag Central Ele-

mentary School in Malungon. She also attended Malandag Institute High School. She took up Government Accounting at the Mindanao State University in General Santos City but was not able to finish it.

Lumbos was very much involved in traditional Blaan culture including beadworks, embroidery, the playing of traditional Blaan musical instruments, dancing (*maral*) and storytelling. A vice president of the Association of Sarangani Tribal Women, she also served as the provincial School of Living Traditions (SLT) Coordinator as well as a Department of Tourism-accredited tour guide. She represented the LTWA as accredited supplier of cultural and other indigenous materials for the province and served as resource person for several activities, among many other functions.

"She was our inspiration. I still remember Lamlifew was the first village I ever visited as a candidate. How the community transformed itself to what it is today is an inspiration for all communities to draw from. We all believed in it because of the warmth and determination the community showed, led by leaders, one of

them, Helen who inspired and will continue to inspire many more," said former Sarangani governor Migs Dominguez.

"She has had a phenomenal two decade run at establishing the Lamlifew Tribal Women's Association, creating the Philippines' first village-initiated and -operated museum, and recovering old banana and root crop varieties and their cultural associations. Helen was the formidable woman with the slight frame...Helen supervised the entire order of things...The modest inflow of cash was, in Helen's hands, rigorously accounted for and shared equitably. Helen was a star avatar for transparency and accountability...In my 40 years of museum building projects, I had never seen a museum causing road construction," recalled Marian Pastor Rocas of TAO Inc.

A "celebration of her life service" and burial was held on February 13, also in her village, about sixty meters from the museum she established. She is survived by her Hiligaynon-Blaan husband Edgardo "Totong" Lumbos, whom she married on December 29, 1995, and five children.—**With reports from Arjho Cariño Turner, photo by Leonardo Rey S. Cariño**

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Harold C. Conklin

Anthropologist

Anthropologist Harold C. Conklin passed away on February 18, 2016, at the age 89.

A well-known professor at Yale University, Dr. Conklin was known for his studies on shifting cultivation. One of the world's leading authorities on ethno-science, he had conducted extensive ethno-ecological and linguistic field research in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines, about the manner in which inhabitants of a particular area perceive and treat their surroundings.

Dr. Conklin had dedicated part of his long anthropological career in researching about Ifugao in 1961, resulting in the unprecedented *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao: A Study of Environment, Culture and Society in Northern Luzon*.

He also did research in Palawan and Mindoro, focusing his analysis on the Hanunoo Mangyan, one of the indigenous groups in Mindoro. Based on his seminal publication *Hanunoo Color Categories*, Dr. Conklin dispelled the notion that the concept of color was universal. He was also noted for his pioneering work on indigenous systems of

tropical forest and terraced agriculture.

Conklin was born in Easton, Pennsylvania, in 1926, and developed an early interest in Native American cultures and languages. He completed his undergraduate degree in 1950 at the University of California in Berkeley, right after he was discharged from the United States Army in 1946. His military service in World War II introduced him to the Pacific and the Philippines in particular, sparking a life-long personal and professional commitment.

He continued his anthropological studies and received his doctorate from Yale University in 1955, after which he joined the faculty in 1962. He also served as chair of the Department of Anthropology and became the director of the Division of Anthropology at the Peabody Museum of Natural History in 1974. He remained curator emeritus even after his retirement in 1996. During his tenure at the Peabody Museum, he had built one of the largest ethnographic collections from the Philippines based on his extensive research.

A recognized world authority on the peoples of the Philippines and Indonesia,

with whom he worked during twenty-five trips and over thirteen years of field research, he published on a vast range of topics, including musical instruments; language policy issues; writing systems and the nature of literacy; the comparative study of folk taxonomies; and the production and significance of cultigens in human societies.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences, Professor Conklin has authored scores of articles, monographs and books. He donated about 730 Hanunoo Mangyan objects which he collected during his field research in Mindoro from 1946 to 1947 to the National Museum in 1983, a number of which bear the Hanunoo Mangyan script incised on them. Some of the artifacts he donated are featured in the Baybayin Gallery of National Museum.

In 2005, Dr. Conklin donated his journal and newsletter collections to the University of the Philippines, Baguio Library. The journal collection can be found in a corner of the Main Library's Serials Section.

The Filipino nation will be forever grateful to his contributions.



IN MEMORIAM



Rene Luis S. Mata

Architect and Heritage Advocate

Architect, heritage advocate and professor Rene Luis “Jojo” S. Mata passed away on January 30, 2016, from cardiac arrest in Lucena City, Quezon, while conducting technical assistance and inspections on heritage train stations for possible conservation work in Lucena and Naga City for the NCCA and Philippine National Railways. He was 62 years old.

The University of the Philippines’ College of Architecture (UPCA) held necrological rites for Mata on February 2 at UP. He was interred the following day at the National Shrine of Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City.

Mata obtained his Bachelor of Sci-

ence in Architecture degree at the University of the Philippines Diliman and Masters in Architectural Restoration and Rehabilitation of Patrimony at the University of Alcala-Henares in Madrid, Spain. He has been with UP since 2002 when he became a senior lecturer at the UPCA. He was an assistant professor at UPCA when he died.

Mata had been a strong partner of the NCCA as one of the country’s passionate heritage conservation architects. He was an executive council member of the National Committee on Monuments and Sites (NCMS) since 1992, initially as a representative of the Intramuros Administration of the Department of Tourism. For

the current term, he was the incumbent vice head of NCMS.

A mentor to young heritage architects and an inspiration for his advocacies in saving Philippine heritage, he was also a member of the Guru Council of the Heritage Conservation Society; a consultant of the National Museum; and vice president of the board of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in the Philippines.

He is survived by his parents Carmelito P. Mata and Lourdes Sevilla Mata, and his siblings Jennina Elena S. Mata-Joven, Rolando Alberto S. Mata, Ricardo Gabriel Felipe S. Mata, Raphael Vicente S. Mata and Raul Carmelo S. Mata.

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